The Theology of INFANT SALVATION

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R. A. WEBB

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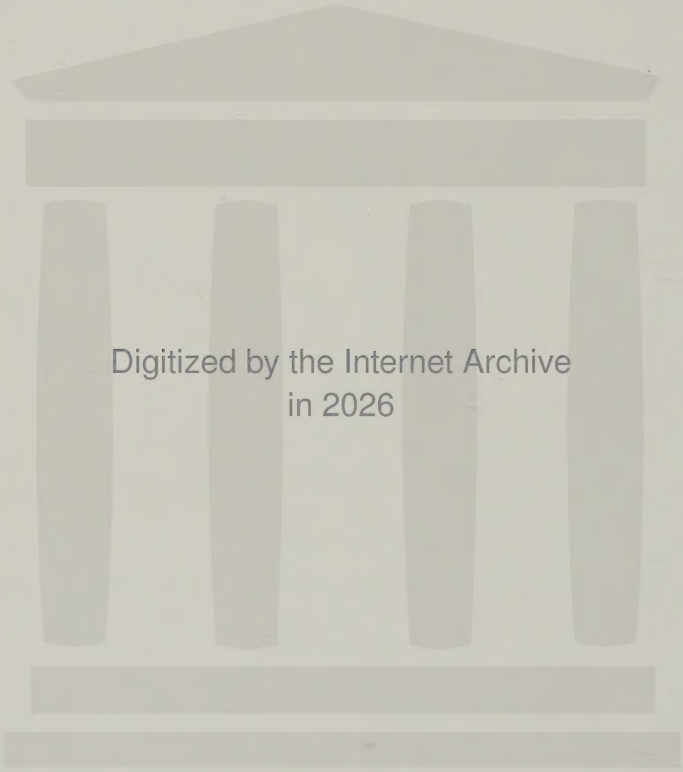
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The Theology

OF

Infant Salvation

BY

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PREFACE.

The disposition of a dead infant is a testing problem for any system of theology.

Calvinism has been adversely criticised, (1) by some as inadequate to this task; and (2) by others it has been severely arraigned as, logically and confessedly, implicating the actual damnation of at least some dead children.

I have written this book to show:

1. That Calvinism, instead of avoiding the issues raised by the dead infant, does meet these issues squarely and fully, scripturally and intelligently.
2. That Calvinism, instead of implicating the damnation of any dead child, is the *only* system of theology, which does, fairly and fully, give a biblical, rational, and theological basis for the doctrine of the salvation of all dead infants, idiots, and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency.

I am indebted to my lad, Robert, for a typewritten copy of the manuscript.

May the volume be a comfort to bereaved Christian parents, and a satisfactory explication of a difficult subject for Christian pastors!

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I.

The General Belief.

The human child, new to earth and sky, is a composite being, having a body and a soul which are held in organic union by a vital bond.

The body has its complement of organs and powers; and physiology is the systematic reduction of this group of physical phenomena. In like manner, the soul has its complement of faculties of thinking and feeling and willing; and psychology is the science which articulates this group of mental phenomena. So, too, the life, in itself mysterious and intangible, presents a third group of vital phenomena which is scientifically treated by biology.

The child's physiological, psychological, and biological history seems to have concurrent and parallel stages and periods of development. Body, soul, and life seem to come into being in the same instant, and, from that time on, to share a common fortune. The body, the soul, the life—there is for each an embryonic, or prenatal, period of growth; for each, an infantile period of progress and increase; for each, a still higher and more advanced stage of childhood; for each, another higher plateau in the ascensive scale towards maturity—youthhood; for each, the maturity and pleroma of manhood; for each, old age and senility and decline; for each, at

last, an end, a finality—so would reason say; but revelation illumines the grave, and shows that there is resurrection for the body, immortality for the soul, and endlessness throughout all enduring ages for human life. For every development in the physical organization, in all normal cases, there appears to be a corresponding development in the mental life. There is, as Aristotle says, an old age of the mind as well as of the body. So intimate is this companionship; so equally halvers are soul and body in all of life's experiences and stages; so dependent does the mind seem to be upon the physical organization, and so completely does body lean upon the mind; from the very beginnings of activity to the moment when death closes the scene, are soul and body so interdependent and reciprocally communicative the one to the other; that the materialist concludes that the human being is nothing but a physical organism, having no soul at all, while the idealist infers the other extreme, that he is only a bundle of ideas without body or form. With divine revelation in our hand we learn that the creative power secures the survival of the soul after death, preserves the body, though it has dissolved into dust, and ordains a resurrection morning when the two shall be twinned again in life everlasting.

Inasmuch as the human body and the human soul make their entry into life at the same moment, and apparently have a joint and co-epochal career, human history is divided, according to the development of its members, into the periods of *Infancy* and *Adulthood*.

I. DEFINITION.

The distinction between the two classes is not only physiological, but psychological and moral also. As there is a moment—however indeterminable—and a process—however mysterious—when the physical

organism passes out of the immature state of infancy into a state of bodily adulthood; so there is some moment, in individuul biography, when the soul becomes "full grown" in its intellectual and moral faculties. Whether the two factors in his constitution—body and soul—synchronise in these changes, that there is a moment when the soul becomes adolescent as well as does the body, is indisputable. Paul says: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

The distinction between an embryo and an infant is not made by a sharp, sheer line of demarcation, because the embryo gradually grows, by infinitesimal approaches, into the infant; and after the same manner the infant grows into the adult, spontaneously and mysteriously, and according to no discernible fixed law and uniform schedule. The fact of this transmission is certain; the time and mode are, perhaps, indefinable.

An infant is a physical and mental incompetent; not an absolute incompetent, but an incompetent in the process of becoming competent. He is on the way to a stage in growth when he will be able to grasp and use himself; when his bodily and mental powers will be strong enough to undertake the ends for which he was created: when he will be able to "put away childish things," and think, feel and act as a man. This transition is gradual, and is made by minute approximations, some of them purely spontaneous and others educative and artificial. But whenever and however this degree in development has been reached, incompetent infancy has been transmuted into competent adulthood. Henceforth individual life is capable and responsible; and each person is an accountable factor in his own biography.

A *child* is a person whose mind and body are, by reason of imperfect development, inferior in physical

and mental development. An *adult* is a person who has arrived at that point in growth where he is able, to a greater or less degree, to use himself and understand himself. A *dwarf* is an instance of arrested bodily growth, more or less complete, and so, in his physiology, lingers in the region of physical childhood. An *idiot* is an instance of arrested mental development, more or less complete, and so, in his psychology, lingers in the region of intellectual childhood. A *lunatic* is an instance of one who has come into the relative fullness of physical and mental development, but whose faculties have in some way become upset and abnormal in their operations.

"But who are infants? Legally, they are minors or those who cannot speak in court for themselves. Morally and religiously infants must include all children prior to the age of personal responsibility for wrong doing. An authority observes: 'Natural infancy is that period of non-responsibility which, by presumption of law, ends with the seventh year of the person's age.' Competence to take an oath, which implies the responsibility for the crime of perjury, and is therefore of the nature of a test of responsibility, was formerly fixed at a given age, but courts now examine a young person offered as a witness. The initial age of responsible discretion doubtless varies, but it is a reasonable opinion that it may range generally from five to seven. It seems to be well ascertained that lasting memory does not as a rule go back of about the close of the third year. Mr. Darwin claimed that his memory did not go back of four. If six then be taken as a reasonable average upward limit of the age of moral infancy, the number of children that die before that age is attained may be approximately computed. It is surprisingly large. The total population of the earth is estimated to be about at least (1,500,000,000) fifteen hundred millions. The average age of man is reckoned at thirty years, then fifty millions, on the average, must die annually. Births and deaths are about equal, and six years being one-fifth of thirty-years, the result is that one-fifth of fifty millions of this age die annually, or

over twenty-seven thousand die daily under six. This estimate is probably too low. The question of infant salvation, therefore, is a question of tremendous import."—*Bible Study, S. S. Laws, pp. 31, 32.*

Moral incompetency is grounded in *mental* incompetency; because conscience is the mind acting in the specific sphere of ethical things. The same intellect, which cognizes the facts of chemistry, perceives moral distinctions; the same sensibility, which feels moral emotions, loves friends, or hates enemies; the same will, which puts forth moral volitions, chooses to eat food, or drink water. The conscience is but the moral side of the soul. Consequently that soul is morally competent as long as it has the use of its faculties. *Infants* and *idiots* are morally incompetent because they have not an intelligent and efficient grasp upon their mental faculties. *Lunatics* are moral incompetents during the period of their insanity, though they may have been moral competents prior to their derangement, and may have been the moral causes of their insanity. But those *heathen* adults, who are in the normal and balanced possession of their faculties, are not moral infants, nor moral idiots, nor moral incompetents. To pronounce any class of persons moral incompetents there must be an antecedent mental deficiency—a deficiency due to incomplete growth, or arrested development, or constitutional derangement. That heathen adult, who speaks as a man, understands as a man, and thinks as a man, is a responsible moral fool; and the plea of moral infancy, or moral idiocy, or moral insanity, in apology for his wicked life, is barred by the fact that he has sound mental faculties, and is equipped with all the intellectual furniture necessary for him to speak correctly, understand soundly, and think truly. I cannot reduce this portion of the race to the class of moral incapables, because they are not mentally incomplete.

II. COMMUNIS CONSENSUS HOMINUM.

That infants and idiots and incapables, living and dying in incompetency, are ultimately saved and glorified, is the catholic faith of the race. Any other fate is repulsive to the reason, to the sentiments, to the conscience of mankind at large. The natural reason can discover no cause for the damnation of this class of persons; the natural heart revolts at the idea of consigning to hell persons who are morally incompetent to distinguish their right hand from their left: and the natural conscience of the race revolts at the justice of inflicting eternal punishment upon persons who are incapable of bringing into being the ground of their punishment, or of appreciating the reason why they penally suffer the displeasure of their Maker. That this class of persons will ultimately be saved is according to the *communis consensus hominum;* and if the common faith of the race be not infallible, there is at least a venerable presumption in favor of its correctness. He is, indeed, a daring mortal who butts his head against the common judgment of mankind. If the maxim—*Vox populi vox dei*—be not absolutely true, it is at least presumptively true; and the burden of proof lies squarely on the shoulders of him who has the temerity to "face down" the race.

III. COMMUNIS CONSENSUS ECCLESIÆ.

That all infants, idiots, and incapables, living and dying in incompetency, are ultimately saved is a tenet of the common faith of the church. There may be theologians and religious teachers, here and there, who have been constrained, by the exegencies of defending some dogma, to deny this doctrine, but they are out of line with the Church's prevailing opinion on the subject. The *communis consensus ecclesiæ* is equally in favor of the final salvation of

that class of persons who live and die in a state of moral incompetency. While the voice of the church is not necessarily inerrant, it is certainly hazardous in the extreme for any individual to depart from the highway of faith which is crowded with the foot-prints of the flock of God as it has tracked its way across the centuries. The presumptions are certainly in favor of that doctrine which the people of God, living in the fellowship of Christ and his Spirit, have come to hold as the result of prayerful, studious, honest inquiry. "If it were not so, I would have told you," is a declaration from the lips of the Saviour, which the inquiring Church of God may comfortingly lay to heart, when wondering whether it has found the truth or some other thing. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." The probability is that the trend of doctrine is in the right direction, and that the faith which is catholic to the saints is a deposit for divine guidance. At any rate, he who departs from the traditions of Christ's Church. does so at his peril, and accepts the task of ultimately vindicating himself at the bar of sacred Scripture.

IV. COMMUNIS CONSENSUS SANCTORUM.

That infants, idiots, and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency, are finally redeemed is not only the common faith of the Church as an organized society, but it is the faith also of pious individuals. Among the people of God, there are many whose faith and saintliness shine like "stars of the first magnitude"—those like Enoch who "walk with God," or those like David who are "men after God's own heart," or those like Nathaniel who are "Israelites in whom there is no guile." These eminent saints, whose lives are pitched on topless heights, along with those lesser disciples whose walk is upon the lower plateaux of grace, find it impossible

to stand by the coffin of a dead infant, and drench the little corpse with the tears of despair, or feel that the pall-bearers of the little casket are devils from hell sent to conduct the funeral to the pit. They may have attained that stage in grace where they are themselves willing to be damned for the glory of God because they are conscious of ten thousand sins, but they are never able to attain that eminence in an imagined spiritually where they are able to say *amen* to the damnation of infant and idiot offspring. Why? Is there any other sane reason but this: the Spirit of God never developed them to this point, because as a matter of fact this class of persons is never damned in the administration of God? We must hold that the Spirit of God, in developing faith into experience, will bring at least some of his chosen spirits to the point of accepting, with equanimity and joy, with complacency and delight, any event which God has in store. That no Christian parent is ever reconciled to the damnation of his infant or idiot child, can be reasonably explained only upon the supposition that God has no such thing in store for their faith. If there were any such height, some of God's pious ones would by grace be elevated to it.

To insure against any possible misunderstanding of me—to protect me against any infelicities of expression I may make in this discussion—I here explicitly set it down that I conciously, intelligently, firmly, and devoutly believe that all infants, idiots, and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency, are finally saved and glorified in heaven.

V. COMMUNIS CONSENSUS THEOLOGII.

But not only is this a tenet of the *communis consensus hominum*, of the *communis consensus ecclesiæ*, of the *communis consensus sanctorum*, but it is likewise a tenet of the *communis consensus*

theologi. It is a doctrine of all the theologies. The radical types of theology are: (1) Pelagian or Rationalistic: (2) Semipelagian or Arminian; (3) Ecclesiastical or Romish; (4) Pantheistic or Mystical; (5) Reformed or Calvinistic. Each of these systems has its own distinctive articulation and construction of the facts of religion, and can be sharply and radically differentiated from each other; but they all agree upon the fact that infants, idiots, and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency, are not damned. They are fundamentally disagreed as to the reason by which they approach this conclusion, but they are one in holding the conclusion. Pelagianism, for example, grounds the salvation of this class of persons in their *sinlessness;* Semipelagianism in the *universality of Christ's atonement;* Romanists in *acts of the Church;* Mystics in their *metaphysical unity with Christ;* Calvinists in the *imputation of Christ's righteousness and the regeneration of the Spirit.* The doctrine is a tenet of all types of theologies, but the systems are radically at variance with each other as to the basing and rationale of the doctrine. With the first its foundation is *ethical;* with the second its foundation is *christological;* with the third its foundation is *ecclesiastical;* with the fourth its foundation is *metaphysical;* and with the fifth its foundation is *evangelical.* The only question over which these representative systems of theology can hold awful and anxious debate is: Which system truly and immutably grounds the doctrine that this class of persons are saved?

Inasmuch as the doctrine that infants and idiots and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency, are ultimately saved, is the catholic faith of the race, the catholic faith of the Church, the catholic faith of the saints, and the catholic faith of theology, there must be some valid exposition which

will truly support and intelligently justify this cherished belief.

This essay is a study of the *foundations* of the doctrine of the salvation of infants dying in infancy. It is both polemical and expository. As polemical, it is an attempt to point out the fallacies in those reasonings which fail to base the doctrine upon those inferences which the Scriptures authorize, for to rest any building upon a rotten foundation can mean nothing but final collapse. As expository, this essay seeks to discover those principles of the Christian faith which are the premises that logically, rationally, necessarily, and happily yield the conclusion that all infants and idiots and incapables, dying in their incompetency, are finally saved in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

Scripture Data.

Any examiner will find that there are fully one thousand verses in the Bible in which the word *child,* its formations, cognates, and correlatives, occur; but when he has looked at them every one he will be surprised and disappointed to find that not a single text explicitly and dogmatically tells us what is the fate of infants dying in infancy. He will find himself approaching them all with a preconceived desire to find in them some clear-cut assurance that all dead infants are finally saved, and that none of them are lost; yet he will rise from his study wishing that the Scriptures were more explicit, but still feeling that the very most which he has derived by honest grammar and exegesis is suggestion, hint, hope; and that he is at last thrown back upon theology, and compelled to settle the matter by inference.

But he must not become unhappy because of this discovery, for the Westminster Confession of Faith has laid down an indisputable canon when it says: "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture." It is unimpeachable logic, that,

whatever is deducible from a proposition by good and neecssary inference, is of equal authority with what is expressly set down in it: that is, whatever is implicitly contained is of equal truthfulness with whatever is explicitly stated. All reasoning consists in unfolding the contents of the premises, and whatever is truly drawn out is as sound and correct as that which was expressly set down. There may be slips in the reasoning, but if the reasoning be correct, the conclusion is as valid as the premise upon which it rests. A vast proportion of human knowledge consists in good and necessary inferences from reliable data; so, though the doctrine of the salvation of infants dying in infancy is not "expressly set down in Scripture," it is there by "good and necessary consequence"—there theologically, logically, suggestively, and he who is willing to trust his reasoning from Scripture data may be confidently assured as to the fate of the dead child.

I propose to parole all the Scripture bearing directly on the subject, and upon it make such fair and reasonable comments and applications of it as my knowledge and prejudices in favor of the doctrine will permit. I do find many *individual infants* in the Scriptures who were undoubtedly saved in their unconscious infancy; and many *statements* about children which fairly warrant, though not demonstrably, their salvation in childhood.

I. SAVED INFANTS.

1. ABEL AND SETH.—That Abel, the second son of Adam, was an elect man there can be no denial, for "the Lord had respect to Abel and his offering" (Gen. 4:4), and our Lord characterized his blood as "the blood of righteous Abel" (Matt. 23:25), and the apostle says that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Heb. 11:4).

But was Abel regenerated in infancy? The Scriptures do not categorically say that he was, but when the third son was born Eve called him Seth (Appointed), and said, evidently by inspiration, "For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen. 4:26). If Seth was "appointed" by God as a godly "seed instead of Abel," it is fair to infer that Abel was a godly child even as he was a righteous man. And it must be noted, for the sake of its bearing upon the sequel of this argument for infant salvation, that when Cain and Abel collided over their sacrifices, it was the apostate Cain who lived, and righteous Abel who perished, thus adumbrating the doctrine that those who die in infancy are the children of God. Here were two children in the beginning of the race's history one of whom (Seth) was certainly elect, while the other (Abel) very probably belonged to that class. We are beginning to score the point that the salvability of infants, as infants, is not an inherent impossibility, and we shall see by the time we have reached the end of this essay that the real difficulty—the very gravamen of the debate—turns upon the *possibility* of the salvation of a dead infant; for the dead infant cannot believe nor comply with any of the conditions of salvation upon which human redemption is proposed.

2. ISAAC.—This patriarch was a subject of saving grace in his infancy. The story of his birth reveals this fact: he is known in biblical history as "the child of promise." When Abraham was one hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety, and "it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women," God said, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed

him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year" (Gen. 17: 19–21). The conception of Isaac was supernatural and miraculous; he was a special product of divine creation for a special divine purpose; he was to be the "seed" and progenitor of God's chosen people: he was a type of Christ himself. It is inconsistent with all these statements to assume that he was a reprobate infant who subsequently became an elect adult. All the harmonies of the narrative compel us to construe him as a subject of grace from his mother's womb; but we cannot, from him as a particular instance, generalize the unlimited conclusion that all infants are elect, because here is rejected and outcast Ishmael by the side of him, a son of the same father and a child of the same house, whose case checks and prohibits the inference that all infants indiscriminately are the elect subjects of God's grace.

3. JACOB. This patriarch furnishes to our hand a clear instance of a human being who was a prenatal subject of God's grace, proving that a state in grace may antedate birth itself; but the story of his twin brother Esau forbids our making the case of Jacob typical of infants universally. "When Rebecca also had conceived by one, our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 11: 10–12). Between these two children a distinction was made which demarcated their lives and destiny for time and eternity; it was God who discriminated between

them; and this discrimination was not made on account of their "works"—their respective antithetical deeds and conduct—for the discrimination was made prior to the birth of both; but the distinction was grounded in the sovereign election of God; and the result was that Jacob was made an object of the divine complacential love and Esau an object of God's displacent wrath. This story yields to our hand the doctrine that some infants are elect and others non-elect—that some are the objects of God's complacency and that others are the objects of his displacency: it is thoroughly illegitimate, however, to infer herefrom that the proportion between elect and non-elect children is half and half of each kind—illegitimate to infer anything at all from this story as to the number of the elect and the non-elect infants. We also learn from this story that an elect infant, as was the case with Jacob, may advance far into mature life before that which was in his destiny begins to come out in his consciousness and behavior and conduct, for Jacob seems not to have been converted until he wrestled with the angel on his return from the service of Laban to the land of his father, now a man of family and of wealth, and whose conduct had been badly morally blemished. We are entitled to infer from this narrative that some infants may be the prenatal subjects of the divine grace, and so bar the reasoning of those who deny upon *a priori* premises the possibility of any immature child being the subject of God's saving love.

4. MOSES.—In this great leader of the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt we have another instance of a person who was a subject of God's grace from his very childhood, and are again entitled, fairly, to the conclusion that a child as such can be a subject of the Spirit's operation. "And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three

months" (Ex. ii.2). This allusion to his *goodliness* might be construed as having reference only to his physical appearance in the eyes of his mother, and so have no spiritual significance whatever, but Stephen described him as "exceeding fair," and the margin has it "exceeding fair to God" (Acts vii.20.) The argument becomes conclusive as to his childish piety when we read in the New Testament, "By faith Moses, when he was born, and hid three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a proper child" (Heb. xi.23). Now since it was by faith that his parents saw the *properness* that was in him, it is clear that they saw by the revelation of God in this new-born babe, not physical beauty, but those spiritual qualities which made him "exceeding fair to God." It took no special act of faith—no spiritual illumination—to show them the natural attractiveness of their offspring: what they saw in him were those grace-imparting qualities, existing in him seminally, which destined him to eminent service in the redemptive purpose of God. The "goodliness" which was perceived in him was godliness.

5. SAMSON.—This heroic Judge—this Hercules of Jewish history—whose feats of strength have been a fascination to children, a source of skepticism to a class of critics, a type of the almightiness of Christ in pulling down the strongholds of Satan, and a crown of glory to our God in using imperfect and blemished human instruments, was a gift of God to Manoah, "a Nazarite unto God from the womb." (Judges xiii.5). As eminent conscientiousness and punctilious morality may exist in the same bosom with eminent ungodliness and impiety, so eminent faith may consist with eminent acts of immorality and vice. We are not permitted to conclude that, because we see a human life marred by murder and adultery as was David's, there is no saving religion in the heart; nor are we to judge that a life marked by

the scrupulousness of the Pharisee, is therefore Christian and saintly. We may not judge Samson, given of the Lord, to be lost because he sinned grievously. "We should be very slow," says Dr. Maclaren, "to pronounce that a man cannot be a Christian because he has done so and so. Indeed, are there *any* sins *incompatible* with Christ's character? All sins are *inconsistent* with it, but that is a very different matter. If the uniform direction of a man's life is sinward, selfish, devoted to the objects and pursuits of time and sense, *that is incompatible* with his being a Christian; but thank God, no single act, however dark, is so, if it be contrary to the main tendency impressed upon character and conduct. It is not for us to say that any single deed shows that any man cannot be a Christian." Let us be cautious, but let us be honest and truthful; many individual sins—gross and heinous in their nature—may be committed by a true child of God; they are all inconsistent, but they do not *ipso facto* damn the child of God. Paul has placed the name of Samson on the "scroll of faith" (Heb. xi.32). All who are saved are saved by faith, because of the sinlessness of Christ, and none because of their own sinlessness. Were personal perfection the ground of salvation, the gospel would become an agency of despair, piling up the faggots about the soul already crackling in the burning. It offers to men the goodness of Christ in lieu of their own goodness, and faith in Jesus can save the worst of men as easily as it can the best.

6. SAMUEL.—This illustrious prophet-judge was given to Hannah in direct answer to prayer; was dedicated to God in his infancy; and ministered before the Lord in his childhood. "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. . . And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli. . . But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child girded with an ephod.

. . And the child Samuel grew before the Lord. . . And the child grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with man." (I Sam. i.27; ii.11,18, 21,26). A number of other similar statements are made concerning the childhood of this wonderful and interesting character in the Old Testament history. His is a clear and indisputable instance of an elect child, living and developing a manhood full of striking service and obedience to the Lord. To argue that all infants are elect because this son of Hannah was chosen of God would be to make the induction wider than the data would warrant; but it does prove that there is nothing in infancy *per se* to exclude it from the operations of God's sovereign grace, and so estops all those who are inclined to hold the insalvability of infants as such, and makes the way clear of *a priori* difficulties for those who hold the salvation of all infants dying in infancy, provided they can find some solid ground upon which to rest the tenet.

7. DAVID.—The great king of Israel and our Lord's progenitor and prototype is another elect infant who was regenerated in his babyhood. "Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts" (Ps. xxii.9). "By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels; my praise shall be continually of thee" (Ps. lxxi. 6). "Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb" (Ps. cxxxix. 13). These declarations are not in contradiction of that other statement which he made about himself when in deepest conviction and penitence: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5). By nature all human beings are "unperfect" (Ps. cxxxix. 16); sinful at the moment of the divine election; depraved at the instant of the divine regeneration. The supralapsarian conception of the gracious decree as terminating on men contemplated in the divine mind as

merely *creatible* and *fallible* is utterly erroneous and inconsistent; while sublapsarian premises, which introduce in the order of the divine decrees predestination after the decree to create and the decree to permit the fall have been set up in the divine mind, require us to think of election, and all gracious operations, as terminating upon men considered in God's thought as both *created* and *fallen*. The clay upon which the potter's wheel worked, grinding some of it into vessels of honor and some of it into vessels of dishonor, was in existence, and in the form of worthless mud, at the logical moment the wheel began to turn (Rom. xi). In the simile the created and formless mud represents mankind as fallen and sinful, and God's shaping action begins upon it in that state. He does not elect and regenerate and sanctify sinless men but sinful men. So David in his mother's womb was logically sinful before God began his gracious operations upon him.

8. DAVID'S CHILD.—The illegitimate child of Bathsheba sickened, and David fasted and prayed for its recovery, but the child died; then "the man after God's own heart" stood up in the strength of an intelligent religious consolation and made this announcement: "I shall go to him but he shall not come to me" (II Sam. xii. 23). What did he mean by this declaration of a common destiny for himself and his child? Did he mean to say only this: *I shall follow my child to the grave in due time?* If so where was there any consolation in the reflection? He knew before the child died that he must in the course of nature pass into the grave, and that whether the child lived or died, they two must have a common lot in the grave. If the reflection that he and his child should both have a common fate in death consoled him after the child's spirit took its departure, I see not why the same thought did not comfort him before the end came in death. The fact is, while the

child lived he wept: when the child died he consoled himself; he knew all during the sickness that death must eventually come to them both; yet this knowledge prior to the child's demise afforded him no comfort; but after the spirit had taken its flight from the little body, then, we are seriously asked to believe, David consoled himself with the reflection that he too must die! While his child lived, life was bitter and death was sweet; but when the child died, then life was sweet and death was bitter! Such a change in mood – we are told – is quite natural and of common observation; fathers, to whom all life was exuberant and throbbing with joys and ambitions, have, by the death of a son, been plunged into the abysses of morbidness and converted into the gloomiest of pessimists, finding their only comfort in permitting their minds to dwell upon their future death day; mothers. too, who nursed with affectionate passion and solicitude their sick child with hearts filled with visions and dreams as they watched by the bedside of their darling, their hope, and their pride, have, when death at last climbed into the chamber window and bore away all that they loved, been known to wipe their tears and stand up in stoical stolidity, and cheer themselves with the thought that they too will soon follow on to the tomb. Such persons are not in reality consoling themselves with the thought of death: for there is, and from the nature of the case there can be, nothing comforting in death *per se;* but those bereaved parents, who act and speak as if the tomb had become to them an asylum of peace and joy, are really consoling themselves with the thought of reunion with the beloved dead in conscious bliss beyond the lips of the grave: this reunion with the person from whom they have been parted by death, and not the fact of death itself, is the consolitory idea which is being nurtured. It was this thought of reunion with his

dead child which cheered David; but where did he think the reunion would be? In the grave? In hell? In heaven? He believed that he himself would go to heaven after death and consequently meant to express the belief that his child had but gone on before him to that blessed abode. The idea of meeting his child in the unconscious grave could not have rationally comforted him; nor could the thought of meeting him in hell have cheered his spirit; but the thought of meeting him in heaven had in itself the power of turning his weeping into joy. But did not David have this thought of a heavenly reunion before the child died? And why did it not comfort him during the sickness of the child as it did after death? The answer is clear and easy: While the child is alive he cannot know what its ultimate destiny will be, whether heaven or hell; because the child is unable to make any conscious manifestation of its relations to God. If the child lives, it may, as far as he can foreread the future, live to be a very wicked man; if it dies, God has made known to him his will through death concerning the final fate of his child. In other words, the living of the child was not *revelatory* of its future destiny, but its dying was *declarative* of a happy and heavenly destiny. There is no other way to make rational and commendatory David's sudden change from inconsolable grief to calmness and satisfaction at the moment the death of his child is reported to him. This incident verges very nigh to a dogmatic proof-text for the assertion *that all infants dying in infancy are finally saved.*

Let me state the argument very compactly: David knew all before the death of the child that he knew after the death of the child—*except whatever thing death itself disclosed;* before he got this additional item of knowledge he was disconsolate, but when death told its story he was cheered; what

was this thing that child's death told him? It was this: Death said, your child has gone to heaven and you shall join it there. And David was rejoiced.

However much we may hunger to make the story of David's child a Scriptural proof positive of the doctrine that all infants dying in infancy are saved, the critics deny the whole bearing and pertinency of the incident upon the subject. (1) We are told that all David's words can be made fairly to mean is—I shall go to the dead, but the dead shall not return to me. (2) This child was the monument of David's guilt and shame; and while the father struggled to do a father's part by it while it lived, he experienced a real satisfaction when this child of crime and shame passed out of his sight. (3) It was a peculiar case: it was the product of a double crime of which it was the victim but in which it was not a responsible partaker; equity and fair dealing demanded compensation for the child and retribution upon the father: so God took him: his case was exceptional, even if he were saved, and cannot safely be construed as typical and didactic as to the fate of all dead children.—In this mode, and in other ways, those who profess to be unsentimental and unbiased and cold inquisitors for truth warn us not to risk our faith in infant salvation upon this story of David's illegitimate child. While I think the interpretation which I have given is more likely to be the true meaning, yet the observations of the critics make us long for some Scripture statement on the fate of dead infants more assuring and more dogmatic and less liable to criticism than this Old Testament incident.

9. JOSIAH.—In the olden days there came a man of God out of the kingdom of Judah and prophesied against the unlawful altar which Jeroboam had set up in Bethel, saying: "Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that

burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee (I Kings xiii. 2). About 334 years thereafter we read: "Josiah was eight years old, when he began to reign. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings xxii. 1,2). From such a narrative as this, I think we are justified in listing Josiah as a godly child, and adding his name to the number of those children whom the Scriptures set forth as having been the subjects of God's grace in their childhood, and so giving us another instance for the induction that children as children are salvable under a scheme of grace.

10. JEROBOAM'S CHILD. I am not clearly and strongly convinced of the bearings of this case upon the subject in hand, but I set this child down in the list of those whom the Scriptures represent as having been saved in childhood because of this statement made to the father by Ahijah the prophet: "Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam" (I Kings xiv. 12,13). This child was the son of a wicked house: there was "good in him towards the Lord:" he died and all Israel mourned for him. Here seems to be a good child which God took out of a wicked house unto himself through the gateway of death, which encourages faith in the general conclusion that only "good" children die.

11. CHILD OF WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.—From the widow of Zarephath the prophet Elijah had received timely and cordial hospitality. Then the widow's child sickened and died. The prophet took the child from its mother's arms and carried him to his chamber and there stretched himself upon the child three times, and prayed unto the Lord, "And the Lord

heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived" (I Kings xvii. 22). My reason for classifying this child among those whom the Scriptures report as saved is speculative, and if any choose to call in question the soundness of my inference I cannot support it by any direct quotation from the narrative. Here is an instance of the resurrection of a dead child, a great and marvellous event: it was instrumentally the result of a good mother's prayers and the prayers of a great man of God: my conclusion is that all the probabilities are against the supposition that he was a reprobate child.

12. CHILD OF THE SHUNEMITE.—This story has its resemblances to the one just preceding it. At Shunem Elisha had received hospitality at the hands of a "great woman," who, with the concurrence of her husband, built for the man of God "a little chamber" for him to occupy as suited his convenience and itinerations. This couple were childless, and in response to the prophet's prayer God gladdened them with a son, who later had a sunstroke while following his father in the harvest field and died. The woman carried her grief to the prophet, who sent Gehazi, his servant, to lay his staff upon the face of the dead child, which, however, was ineffective. Then the prophet stretched himself upon the child, "and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened its eyes" (II Kings iv. 35). To grant a reprobate child *in response to prayer* would be worse than giving a stone instead of bread; and it were better that a reprobate child be not raised from the dead.

13. ISAIAH.—This illustrious evangelical prophet was sanctified and called from his mother's womb to be the servant of the Lord. "The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. . . . And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be

his servant, to bring Jacob again to him" (Isa. xlix. 1,5). I think without doubt that we can set down Isaiah in the list of those whom God has chosen from infancy and childhood to be his servants and to accomplish his purposes with the children of men.

14. JEREMIAH.—The self-conscious and shrinking son of Hilkiah can be confidently set down in this class of elect children. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the days of King Josiah, saying: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee prophet to the nations" (Jer. i. 5). Could any statement of prenatal sanctification be stronger or more graphic, and can any man doubt what would have been the final fate of this child had he died in infancy? Yet the commentators weaken this passage by telling us that these predictions are *official* and not *personal*—that God formed him for a prophet, sanctified him for the office, and installed him in it, but nothing is predicated concerning his subjective character; but it seems to me that one cannot read these words and then think of Jeremiah as a reprobate infant. Later when he became an object of derision and gross treachery, he cried out in his agony, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: Let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying: 'A man-child is born unto thee;' making him very glad" (Jer. xx. 14, 15). But this passionate threne of sorrow only illustrates to what depths of gloom the children of God may be plunged by the wickedness which surrounds them and the unreasoning and malicious oppositions which they encounter in discharging the duties which their Maker has laid upon them. The servant of God, who perceives correctly and thinks truly, not infrequently finds himself upon the edge of despair: only the

superficial and trifling are always gay and light-spirited.

15. JOHN THE BAPTIST. —"He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb" (Luke i. 15). This seems to be so explicit, so categorical, so assertive, that one is almost startled out of his seat when he learns that some in their zeal to prove that only conscious adults are salvable deny that John's character was affected by the Spirit, and contend that he was only filled with the Holy Ghost as the *forerunner* of Christ; but it is simply incredible that a reprobate should "be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

16. PAUL.—In describing his religious experiences and in giving an explanation of his radical conversion from an enemy of Christianity into one of its most ardent friends, this great apostle employs these words: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen" (Gal. i. 15,16). Elect as a child and set apart by grace to be a disciple of Christ and a minister of his gospel, for the first years of his life his religious zeal was so misdirected that he was perverted into a persecutor of those with whom he was predestined to be affiliated; but in due time God "revealed" his Son to him, and the pervert became a convert, and the man who was living out of harmony with his destiny was brought to that course of conduct and way of living which reflected truly the purpose of God. This is quite common for there to be a parenthesis of sin and disobedience between the divine call in infancy and the conscious and obediential response to that call in mature adulthood. In other words, divine election does not always issue in obedience simultaneously with the infant's rise to consciousness and moral accountability. We are warranted in believing that every elect person will

sooner or later believe and repent and obey the gospel, but we are not warranted in holding that there never will be any preface of sinning prior to conscious conversion.

17. TIMOTHY.—The statement concerning Timothy I think is strong enough to warrant his being classed with those children who were made the subjects of God's grace during infancy. "From a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

18. JESUS.—Whether pertinent to the subject in hand or not, here at least is one unimpeachable instance of a holy child. "And the angel answered and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). Of course the paternity of this child, to mention nothing else about him, differentiates him radically and fundamentally from all other human children, but this single instance explodes that *a priori* reasoning which finds something in childhood itself which renders it inherently unsanctifiable and insalvable; and it also explodes that reasoning which will allow that nothing can be a subject of the Spirit's operation except upon condition of a precedent faith and repentance and obedience, refusing to make any distinction between the adult capable and the infant incapable. The Saviour himself was once a Holy Child—and holy without baptism. As a mediatorial and theanthropic child, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, possessing true and proper humanity, strictly human and not merely phenomenal and apparent, he was sanctified and made sinless by the operation of the Holy Ghost in his miraculous conception, and developed an adult life which was absolutely taintless, holy, harmless and undefiled and

separate from sinners. It yields to our hand the proposition that human childhood (for he was a true human child) is not intrinsically such a thing in its psychological nature as cannot possibly be a subject of God's supernatural and saving grace.

I have now gone through the Scriptures and listed eighteen children, all of them probably, and some of them certainly, the subjects of the gracious and saving operations of God's Spirit in their infancy—all of them reasonably held to be elect children. I do not think these are all the children mentioned in the Bible who can be fairly so classified, but they are the most conspicuous instances. Some of these did die in infancy, and were thereby providentially cut off from showing in mature life what had been graciously implanted in their childish hearts; but most of them lived to manhood and illustrated, in one degree or another, the saving grace of God. Assuming that I have reported these cases correctly, I think it may be fairly and calmly inferred:

(1) That infants, as such, may be elected, regenerated and sanctified, and become the beneficiaries of all the blessings of redemption, without any *psychological violence* to the nature of the child on the one hand, or *evangelical violence* to the gospel scheme on the other; that these concrete instances prove the possibility of the salvation of infants under age, according to the covenant of grace.

(2) That, inasmuch as these children are distinguished from, and some of them contrasted to, other children, we must conclude that all children, without exception, are not elected, regenerated and sanctified in infancy; that there are non-elect infants as well as elect infants.

(3) That, inasmuch as all the infants, whose deaths are recorded in the Scriptures, and any revelation at all is made concerning their final fate, were elect,

regenerated and saved, we are entitled by induction to the broad generalization that *all infants dying in infancy* were likewise elect, regenerated and saved.

(4) That, if any still object that the instances are too few and too obscure to justify a generalization so wide and dogmatic, I can only reply that, in the way of concrete instances, this is the best I can find in the Scriptures; and that if they do not prove that all dying in infancy are saved, they certainly do not show one single case of a lost dead infant, and that it is therefore purely gratuitous to assume that there are any such cases. To state this phase of the argument compactly: the Scriptures do introduce us to some infants who were elect and died and were saved; they do not present us any infant who was non-elect and died and was lost. It is illegitimate however to make the silence of Scripture a premise for a positive doctrine of the damnation of any infant.

II. SCRIPTURE STATEMENTS.

But turning away from these concrete cases of infant salvation, the Christian Scriptures make some statements about children, which, when fairly interpreted, support the tenet under consideration. I propose now to bring forward the leading passages of this character and examine their bearings upon the topic in hand.

1. "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless" (Ex. xii. 22,24). In this strong passage God throws legal protection around the "widow and fatherless child," and fences them against maltreatment as though he had some special interest in this class of persons. This idea is repeated in

several other places. I grant that there is not much that is applicable in the text beyond the fact that it shows that childhood as such is not inherently offensive to God, but something which so elicits his solicitude that its maltreatment causes him to threaten the oppressor with his "wrath" and "sword." It is thus worth something to the argument to know that childhood in itself is an object of God's deepest concern. It may however be easily objected that this law specifies the "fatherless child," and has nothing to say about the motherless child or the child both of whose parents are alive.

2. In the drama of Job, Elihu paints the condition of a penitent who has suffered under conviction for sin until he has lost his appetite for "dainty food," and is on the verge of giving his life "to the destroyers;" but at the critical moment of his despair, the penitent "finds a ransom," and "his flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth" (Job xxxiii. 25). David, when he would sing of his humility, used the same figures: "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned from its mother: my soul is even as a weaned child" (Ps. cxxxi. 2). In portraying in heightened figures the peace and blessedness of the Messiah's millenial reign, Isaiah described it as a period in which the "sucking child" shall be secure from all hurt: "And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den" (Isa. xi. 6). Such passages as these, while they are but poetic allusions to the relative innocence and docility and helplessness of childhood, they have bearing upon the salvability of children in that the childish disposition and temperament are made the type and model of some of the most praiseworthy traits of Christian character and conduct, therefore suggesting that if the *copies* be so commendable the *original* cannot be hopelessly

offensive? That is, these texts indicate a divine attitude towards childhood as such, so that, if we conceive of that childhood as being purged by grace, it would appear extremely lovely in the divine eyes.

3. In the New Testament the story of the healing of the lunatic child, whose lunacy was explained as a demoniacal possession: "And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit. and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father" (Luke ix. 42). This text shows us that the Redeemer took cognizance of some children, diagnosed their malady as demoniac, and in compassion delivered them of the evil spirit. Would it be illegitimate to construe this case as typical and illustrative of his ability to save children, and as proof of the fact that he at least saves some children? This supposition is strengthened when we add the story of the healing of the nobleman's sick child, whose recovery was earnestly sought by the father at the hands of Jesus who said to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth" (Jno. iv. 50). These instances show us that Jesus had some sort of solicitude for children, and exerted himself in some way for the benefit of some of them.

4. "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them. And said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Mat. xviii. 1,6). By way of illustrating his answer to the question—"who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven,"

—Christ called a "little child" to him, and then "set him in the midst of them." This "little child" was a literal human being, whom Christ could pick up in his arms and set him before his disciples without doing any violence to the dignity of the child or making a breach upon any of the proprieties of life. It is simply absurd to make this "little child" upon whom Christ is to demonstrate his lesson a full-grown disciple, who by a figure of speech based upon the immaturity of his faith is accommodatingly called a "little child." This child in the midst was a sure enough immature human being.

Pointing to him, or in some other manner indicating him, our Lord said to them all: "Except ye become like him in disposition and docility, ye cannot enter heaven at all." This is the central lesson—that the adult must become childlike as a precondition of salvation; and it is strictly true that the incident throws its stress upon the Christian *childlikeness*. But I ask, would it not be an unendurable contradiction for the *model* to be excluded and the *modeled* to be accepted?—for the *original* to be discarded and the *copy* to be welcomed? for the *pattern* to be rejected and the *patterned* to be received? If *childlikeness*—a fair and reasonable reproduction of the traits of the child in the adult—should commend the adult to the favor of God, the argument would seem to be *a fortiori* that the *childness* itself would not be discredited. If grace-produced humanity in an adult makes that adult salvable in the eyes of Christ, a grace-sanctified humility in a child must render that child likewise acceptable in the eyes of the Redeemer.

But we are admonished that the humility of the believer is *gracious* while the humility of the child is *natural*, and that it is illogical to argue from the acceptability of a *natural* humility. I admit the legitimacy and effectiveness of this conclusion; but

retort, that the argument is from *gracious* humility in the adult to *gracious* humility in the child. I do not believe that any human being—adult or infant—is salvable apart from divine grace.

Having answered the question which had been propounded under the emblem of a little child, our Lord takes occasion to carry the lesson further, and metaphorically characterizing all of his disciples as "little children," he delivers solemn warning against offending one of his "little ones"—a man with a gracious childlike heart.

I know this interpretation is regarded as sophistical and as exegetically forced between the lines to subserve the purpose of special pleading; and I must honestly admit that it falls far short of a demonstration; but it is not without its plausibilities, and ought to be plaited with other Scriptures as a part of the biblical testimony on the question.

5. The biblical passage which comes nearest to being a dogmatic proof-text on the subject of infant salvation is that great utterance of our Lord recorded by each of the synoptic evangelists.

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them and departed thence" (Matt. xix. 14,15).

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke xviii. 16,17).

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein. And he

took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark x. 13–16).

The meaning of this saying hinges upon the clause—"of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and the exegesis of this clause turns upon the correlative of the pronoun *such*. The Greek is τῶν τοιούτων, meaning literally *of this kind*, or *of this sort*, is the kindom of heaven. What *kind?* what *sort?* The noun is not expressed and must be supplied from the context.

(1) One view supplies the noun *persons*, and construes the clause—*of such child-like persons is the kingdom of heaven*. According to this interpretation all the passage means is, that only such persons as are childlike in nature are to be considered members of the kingdom of heaven. Meyer: "By τῶν τοιούτων we are not to understand literal *children*, for the Messianic kingdom cannot be said to belong to children as such, but to men of a childlike disposition of character." But if this be all that is meant, then the Master's indignation must be thought of as having been aroused by his disciples' proposition to send away, not *members*, but only *types*, of the kingdom of God. Was this all? was the Redeemer's displeasure excited only by the prospect of there being taken away from him a happy object-lesson? If so, then he but leveled his criticism at their gross stupidity and blockheadedness, in not having the perception to recognize a living text in the children, from which to preach a good sermon on Christian humility. That does not seem to my mind to be a sufficient reason for his deep displeasure and stinging rebuke. Nor does this view sufficiently explain the fact that our Lord *laid his hands on the heads of these children and blessed them*. Why? According to this view, he did it not because they were *members* of the kingdom of God, but because they were apt *illustrations* of the members of his

kingdom—mere *emblems* of what the members of his kingdom should be.

(2) A second interpretation construes the *children* of the context as the antecedent of the word *such*, and renders—*of such children as these who are "brought," or who "come," to me is the membership of the kingdom of heaven composed.* Hence his indignation at his thickheaded disciples; they were about to send away from him some of the true members of the kingdom of God. Hence he took them in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them; he was not blessing mere types and emblems and figures of speech, but true and literal members of the kingdom of God. Such infants as were "brought" to him and such children as "came" to him were subjects of his saving grace and *bona fide* members of the kingdom of God. His disciples did not understand: he caused them to know better—to know that these little children were the objects of his redemptive solicitude and constituents of the kingdom of God.

Bengel adopts this view, and makes this apt comment in the form of an argument *a fortiori*: "Granted that such are intended as are like infants; then much more infants themselves, who are *such*, have the kingdom of God, and both ought to receive it and *can* by coming to Christ."

Stier comments and reflects upon this saying of Christ in these choice words: "That the kingdom of heaven consists of such children, as also of childlike men, not on account of their own original innocence, but through the saving grace in which they receive it, as a gift and blessing, is equally evident: '*if they come*, and come to *me*, then of such is the kingdom of heaven.' . . In all the so-called co-operation of man, there remains always the first and ever present *initiative* of God's working and giving; the more *passively* in its true sense, the man comes and takes,

so much the better, and at the end as at the beginning, he actually enters only by his true passivity into the kingdom of heaven. Is not the child in the arms of its mother a living call for help? . . If we have to do with men, then the true rule is: Be no child, trust, look to—whom? But if we have to do with God, then it cannot often enough be repeated: Be only a child—follow the call, take the gift, obey the word, all as if thou didst for thyself be lifted, carried, comforted, blessed. . . And if *baptised* children *die*, they are saved and blessed before they could resist. If *unbaptised*? . . He who lets them die tells them precisely to *come to Him*, and will assuredly have the same blessing for them in the other world, which in this he does not withhold from them."—*Words of the Lord Jesus, Vol. III. pp. 19–22.*

But of all the commentators I think John Calvin (reputed by many to be a teacher of infant damnation) makes the clearest and strongest argument upon this saying of our Lord for infant salvation.

"This narrative is highly useful; for it shows that Christ receives not only those who, moved by holy desire and faith, freely approach unto him, but those who are not yet of an age to know how much they need his grace. Those *little children* have not yet any understanding to desire his blessing; but when they are presented to him, he gently and kindly receives them, and dedicates them to the Father by a solemn act of blessing. We must observe the intention of those who present the children; for if there had not been a deep-rooted conviction in their minds, that the power of the Spirit was at his disposal, that he might pour it out on the people of God, it would have been unreasonable to present their children. There is no room, therefore, to doubt, that they ask for them a participation of his grace; and so, by way of amplification, Luke adds the particle *also;* as if he had said that, after they had experienced the various ways in which he had assisted adults, they formed an expectation likewise in regard to ***children,***

that, if he *laid hands on them,* they would not leave him without having received some of the gifts of the Spirit. The *laying on of hands* (as we have said on a former occasion) was an ancient and well known sign of blessing; and so there is no reason to wonder, if they desire that Christ, while employing that solemn ceremony, should pray for the *children.* At the same time, as *the inferior are blessed by the better* (Heb. vii. 7), they ascribe to him the power and honor of the highest *Prophet.*

Matt. xix. 13.—*But the disciples rebuked them.* If a crown had been put on his head, they would have admitted it willingly, and with approbation; for they did not yet comprehend his actual office. But they reckon it unworthy of his character to receive *children;* and their error wanted not plausibility; for what has the highest Prophet and the Son of God to do with *infants?* But hence we learn that they who judge Christ according to the feeling of their flesh are unfair judges; for they constantly deprive him of his peculiar excellencies, and, on the other hand, ascribe, under the appearance of honor, what does not at all belong to him. Hence arose an immense mass of superstitions which presented to the world a fancied Christ. And therefore let us learn not to think of him otherwise than what himself teaches, and not to assign to him a character different from what he received from the Father. We see what happened with Popery. They thought that they were conferring a great honor on Christ, if they bowed down before a small piece of bread; but in the sight of God it was an offensive abomination. Again, because they did not think it sufficiently honourable to him to perform the office of Advocate for us, they made for themselves innumerable intercessors; but in this way they deprived him of the honor of Mediator.

14. *Suffer Children.*—He declares that he wishes to receive *children;* and at length, *taking them in his arms,* he not only embraces, but *blesses* them by the *laying on of hands;* from which we infer that his grace is extended even to those who are of that age. And no wonder; for since the whole race of Adam is shut up under the sentence of death, all from the least even to the greatest must perish, except those who are rescued by the only Redeemer.

To exclude from the grace of redemption those who are of that age would be too cruel; and it is therefore not without reason that we employ this passage against the Anabaptists. They refuse baptism to *infants*, because infants are incapable of understanding that mystery which is denoted by it. We, on the other hand, maintain that, since baptism is the pledge and figure of the forgiveness of sins, and likewise of adoption by God, it ought not to be denied to *infants*, whom God adopts and washes with the blood of his Son. Their objection, that repentance and newness of life are also denoted by it, is easily answered. *Infants* are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity of their age, till that power which was concealed within them grows by degrees, and becomes fully manifest at the proper time. Again when they argue that there is no other way in which we are reconciled to God, and become heirs of adoption, than by faith, we admit this as to adults, but, with respect to *infants*, this passage demonstrates it to be false. Certainly the *laying on of hands* was not a trifling or empty sign, and the prayers of Christ were not idly wasted in air. But he could not present the infants to God without giving them purity. And for what did he pray for them but that they might be received into the number of the children of God? Hence it follows, that they were renewed by the Spirit to the hope of salvation. In short, by embracing them, he testified that they were reckoned by Christ among his flock. And if they were partakers of the spiritual gifts, which are represented by baptism, it is unreasonable that they should be deprived of the outward sign. But it is presumption and sacrilege to drive from the fold of Christ those whom he cherished in his bosom, and to shut the door, and to exclude as strangers those whom he does not wish to be *forbidden to come to him*.

For of such is the kingdom of heaven.—Under this term he includes both *little children* and those who resemble them; for the Anabaptists foolishly exclude children, with whom the subject must have commenced, but at the same time, taking occasion from the present occurrence, he intended to exhort his disciples to lay aside malice and pride, and put on the nature of *children*. Accordingly, it is added

by Mark and Luke, that no man *can enter into the kingdom of heaven* unless he be made to resemble a child. But we must attend to Paul's admonition, *not to be children in understanding, but in malice* (I Cor. xiv. 20).—*Harmony of the Evangelists, Vol. II., pp. 388-391.*

There are but three reasons which are offered against the acceptance of the "Suffer little children" saying of our Lord as a satisfactory and final proof-text of the doctrine of infant salvation. (1) Of *such*—of this sort of adults—persons who have become childlike—of this kind of adults the kingdom of heaven is composed; and therefore we are told the passage makes no utterance whatsoever upon the topic of the salvation of infants. (2) But if it refers at all to the salvation of infants, it must be restricted to two classes of infants—(a) those who are "brought" to Christ, and (b) those who "come" to Christ. By implication then, we are told that a third class (c) those who are neither "brought" nor "come" of themselves to Christ is not salvable, and, consequently, should any of this class die they must be ranked among the "lost." But this class—those who are neither "brought" nor "come"—include a countless multitude of children both in Christendom and in heathendom; and consequently this passage—we are told—throws no light upon this multitude of babies who are neither "brought" nor "come" to Christ. As strict constructionists are we warranted in extending the scope of this passage to other children than those mentioned—those who are "brought" and those who "come" to the Redeemer? The critics tell us that to make the saying include *all sorts* and kinds of children is to read into it our desires, and force the passage to mean what we would like it to mean. So all sacramentarians reason that only those children who are "brought" by parents and godfathers, or who "come" by way of baptism, to Christ,

can legitimately be held to be the subjects of Christ's predications in the "Suffer little children" saying. But the "bringing" and the "coming" in this saying is but surplusage, but incidental to the narrative, but descriptive of the *mode* in which these particular children happened to be in his presence. To take the other view, is to construe the "bringing" and the "coming" as essential, as the very ground and reason for the salvability of these particular children; and require us to argue that they were salvable *because they were brought or came.* Then the clear and intolerable antithesis would be that infants are damnable because they are not "brought," and children are lost because they do not "come" to Christ—that is, they are damnable because of somebody's neglect. It is a hard saying that children are damnable because of their father's sins.

"What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. . . The soul that sinneth it shall die. . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. xviii. 1-30). It is therefore illogical and unbiblical to damn the child because of the sin of its parents or god-fathers in omitting to bring him to Christ. That iniquity the parent must bear. "As I live, saith the Lord God, never again shall ye people of Israel use that fallacious old proverb—The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Consequently if our Lord—"Suffer little children, etc."—teaches the salvation of infants, its force cannot be broken by assuming that it has reference to

those children only who are "brought" to him or who "come" to him.

6. There is a passage in eschatology which indirectly teaches that infants dying in infancy are saved by grace because they are incompetent to stand the only sort of judgment which is revealed in Scripture —a judgment according to works. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord prophesied that he would say to the damned in the day of judgment, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 23). In his prophetic discription in which he pictures all nations as gathered before his judgment seat, and separated into the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left hand, having brought into review the deeds of the two classes, he represents himself as saying to the evil-doers on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41), and gives as the ground of this rejection, the fact that they had not ministered unto him. Paul in enumerating classes of persons who would be excluded from the kingdom of God, says: "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. vi. 9,10). Infants cannot do, nor be, any of these things. Then this apostle lays down the general principle upon which the last judgment is to be conducted: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. v. 10). But the infant dies before it can be a doer of either "good" or "bad," and so cannot be arraigned upon the ground of its personal deeds. In the Apocalypse, ten verses from the end of God's communication to men, John represents Christ as saying: "Behold, I come quickly;

and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be" (Rev. xvii. 12). It appears from these, and a multitude of similar statements that future and final retribution will be graduated according to "the deeds done in the body;" but dead infants have been prevented by the providence of God from committing any responsible deeds of any sort in the body, and consequently infants are not damnable upon *these premises;* and there is no account in Scripture of any other judgment based upon any other grounds. I think therefore that a study of the final judgment entitles us to infer that *actual condemnation* is always predicated upon *actual sin.* Original sin renders all the race—adults and infants—*damnable;* but the judgment scene shows us that *damnability* is converted into *damnation* only upon the ground of actual, personal, and conscious sins—a kind of sin which no infant dying in infancy could commit.

"Works" are the ground of final judgment. This is their precise, their exact function. They condition the judgments which God will pass upon men at the last day. It is easy to support this proposition from the Scriptures. "Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. v. 9,10). Paul here says, "We labor that we may be accepted;" and that we shall be "judged according to that which we have done." Judgment, unlike justification and sanctification, is not *ex gratia* but *ex labore.* "God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, upon

every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 6–9). The general principle is, "To every man according to his deeds:" specifically, "To those who seek, eternal life;" but to those who "obey not, indignation and wrath." There can be no debate here as to the position "works" will occupy in the final distribution of the awards of destiny. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 6). The "harvest," if we can accept this great announcement, will be, not *ex gratia*, but *ex labore*. "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to man; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Eph. vi. 7, 8). Here again our doctrine is unequivocal—"Whatsoever good thing any man doeth shall be fairly acknowledged by the Lord." "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. iii. 23–25). Here is an abounding exhortation to "do," and "the reward of the inheritance" is made to hang on the character of the deeds: "and there is no respect of persons." The final reward and the final condemnation are not therefore *ex gratia* but *ex labore*. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 21.) This verse is in the last chapter of God's communication to men. It tells the earth that the Second Advent of Christ is impending; and that when that momentous event, now swelling in the bosom of eternity, breaks into historic fact, the Saviour will distribute to "every man according as his work shall be." There remains to be added to complete the induction the scenic passage which our Lord himself drew in description of

the last judgment in which he adopted "works" as the principle of division, and with it separated the nations of the earth into "sheep" and "goats," the former on his "right hand" and the latter on his "left hand," and according to their deeds admitted the "sheep" into "life eternal," and dismissed the "goats" into "everlasting punishment." This completes the biblical proof of the doctrine that the final judgment is according to human "works." God's wrath and God's favor are measured to men according to the moral quality of their deeds. He judges them not *ex gratia*, but *ex labore*—not according to his love, but according to their labors. They will be judged out of "the books" which contain the story of their earthly lives, and according to the contents of those volumes—the heathen according to his biography, and the Christian according to his biography, and the infant according to his biography; there is "no respect of persons," there is no fact, however insignificant, or however important, which will be overslaughed; and there will be no overestimating and no underestimating of a solitary item in the history of any human being. Omniscience will parole the fact, and justice will hold the scales, and grace will not so much as be present in the court-room, and mercy will retire into the bosom of God without a plea on her lips or a tear in her eye. Grace and mercy will have finished their career with men, and will not so much as appear upon the scene. Omniscience and justice will rule that hour—the one to obtain the facts and the other to meet out the deserts.

CHAPTER III.

Uncertain Data.

Eager to grasp any fragment of Scripture, and predisposed to any plausible interpretation which may be pressed into service for the support of the doctrine of the salvation of dead infants, nevertheless I think some texts have been quoted which palpably have inconclusive bearings upon the subject, and their use has weakened rather than strengthened the argument.

1. Dr. Strong quotes John iii. 16, "God so loved the world," in order to score the point that "world" "includes infants," and that infants therefore are the objects of the same divine love which provides salvation for adults. If infants are a constituent part of the "world," and the "world" is an object of saving love, then infants are salvable *because they belong to the "world."* (1) But this reasoning is fallacious, because it leaves out of sight the fact that this saying of Christ distinctly prescribes that members of the "world" who become beneficiaries of this atoning love must be believers; but infants cannot believe; and therefore—it would seem—they cannot be beneficiaries of this saving love. Such would seem to be the logic of the text. Let us test it by substituting infants for "world": "God so loved *infants* that he gave his only begotten Son, that whatever *infant*

believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." The very core of the whole difficulty consists in the fact that infants cannot believe; and believing seems to be clearly the precondition of all the benefits indicated in the text. (2) If infants are held to be salvable because God loves the "world," then the "world" itself must be salvable as a whole in order that infants may be salvable as part of the "world." The interpretation to be conclusive would have to be in this syllogistic form: The whole "world" is saved; infants are a part of the "world;" therefore infants are saved. The major premise is sheer universalism, and if that be a sound theory of redemption, then there is no question concerning the salvation of infants; but those who quote this great saying of Christ as a proof-text of this doctrine are not universalists. (3) The word "world" is used in two senses in the Scriptures—the "world" which is lost, and the "world" which is saved—the old world and the new world—the world which God has rejected, and the world which God has elected. Which of these "worlds" is the subject of predication in this text? There is a new heaven and a new earth with their inhabitants revealed in divine revelation as the final outcome of all redemptive processes: and nothing in it, or pertaining to it, can ultimately be lost; but the very point to be determined is whether all children dying in infancy belong to this "world" which God loved, and for which he gave his only begotten Son to die. If dead infants belong to this elect "world," their salvation is assured of course; but do they belong to this "world"? That is precisely and definitely the question upon which this text speaks not a word. Consequently the effort to make this a proof-text involves, logically, universalism.

2. It is quite common to quote as a proof-text for infant salvation those passages of Paul in which he

runs the parallel between Adam and Christ, and many suppose the translation of these verses in the Revised Version makes them stronger and more pertinent than as rendered in the Authorized Version. "Death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. . . For through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. And the law came in beside that the tresspass might abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 15–21). "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. xv. 22). "We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (II Cor. v. 15). These descriptions of God's manifold provision—we are told—show that the blessings of the cross are coextensive with the ruins of the fall; that the "all" who sinned in the first Adam are the same in personnel with the "all" who are redeemed in the second Adam; that infants are included in the first "all," and are therefore included in the second "all;" that as there was an application of Adamic death to infants without their conscious agency, so there is an application of Christian life to infants without their conscious consent. Over against the universality of sin and death in the first Adam is set the universality of life and atonement in the second Adam: the ruin of the one is exactly equalized by the salvation of the other.

(1) The whole Scripture is the larger context of every text. There is an analogy of faith—a trend of teaching—a prevailing view, which threads the

divine revelation from beginning to end, and that exegesis of a particular passage which ignores, contradicts, or departs, from the general alignment of biblical teaching violates that common sense canon of construction which demands that any and every document be construed in all its parts in harmony with the catholic teachings of the whole. The application of this principle requires us to interpret this famous Pauline parallelism in this way: *As all who were in Adam died, so all who are in Christ shall be made alive.* The judgment of condemnation and the judgment of justification come in the same identical modes; but the constituency of the First Adam and the constituency of the Second Adam are not identical in personnel. God appointed the entire human race as the constituency of the First Adam, but a part of the human race as the constituency of the Second Adam. As all who were in Adam died, so (in the same manner) all who were in Christ were made alive.

(2) Any other exegesis than that which distinguishes the personnel of the constituencies of the two Adams lands us squarely into universalism, and so puts us clearly out of line with all the Scripture which teaches that some members of the human race are finally lost. Is it not clear that we would be inconsistent with the general trend of divine revelation if we interpreted the parallelism in this way: As every member of the human family was in Adam and died when he died, so every member of the human family was in Christ and was made alive when he was made alive? The Adamic constituency was not made condemnable, but was actually condemned; and so—we must needs reason—the Christian constituency was not made salvable, but was actually saved. If these two constituencies were precisely the same persons (every member of the human race), logic inexorably shuts us up to the conclusion that

the entire human race is saved even as it was condemned. The Adamic inheritances were not possibilities—damnabilities—but damnation; if the parallel holds true, the Christian inheritances are not mere possibilities—salvabilities—but salvation; if all mankind heired the Christian consequences, all are saved. The only way to escape universalism pure and absolute is to interpret: *As all who were in Adam died, so all who were in Christ are made alive.*

(3) The Scriptures do teach a doctrine of divine election, explain it as we may. If there be any sort of election, either conditional or unconditional, then some who were in Adam were not in Christ; a universal election is a contradiction in terms. This doctrine constrains the Calvinist at least to construe the famous parallel in this way: As all who were in Adam died, so all who were in Christ were made alive.

If this interpretation be received as sound, then it falls out of our hands as a proof-text for the salvation of all dead infants, for it leaves it unsaid and unaffirmed, that all dead infants are in Christ Jesus. If they were in him, of course they would be saved; but are they in him? This is the question upon which this famous parallel teaches not a word; for all that it proclaims is, that as all who were in Adam died, so all who were in Christ shall be made alive. What are the marks, or evidences or proof of being, *in Christ?* In the case of adults, faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience; in the case of dead infants, their *death.* But this answer concerning infants is not set forth in the parallelism; it is derived from other Scriptures.

3. "Since there is no evidence that children dying in infancy are regenerated prior to death, either with or without the use of external means, it seems most probable that the work of regeneration may be performed by the Spirit in connection with the infant soul's first view of Christ in the other world. As the

remains of natural depravity in the Christian are eradicated, not by death, but at death, through the sight of Christ and union with him, so the first moment of consciousness for the infant may be coincident with a view of Christ the Saviour which accomplishes the entire sanctification of its nature." —*Strong: Theology, p. 357.*

To support this solution of the matter Dr. Strong quotes two passages of Scripture: "But we all beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. iii. 18). "We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I Jno. iii. 2).

This is a curious argument, and shows how hard bestead this distinguished theologian is to adduce from Scripture satisfactory proofs of infant salvation. (1) It contains a confession that infants are not "regenerated prior to death, either with or without the use of external means." This is tantamount to affirming that infants are not salvable prior to death; and consequently that the whole question must be carried beyond the grave, and determined by a speculation as to what might possibly occur beyond the tomb. (2) It alleges that the dead infant is regenerated by the Spirit in connection with its "first view of Christ in the other world." But the blind eye of the soul must be opened—regenerated—prior to the soul's having any "vision" of Christ; how can the "vision," either before or at or after death, be causative of the opening? The effect follows the cause. (3) The two texts are quoted to prove that the remnants of sin in both infant and adult are eradicated through "the sight of Christ"—the adult by a vision just prior to death, and the infant by a vision immediately after death. In other words, the dying adult Christian gets the sanctifying vision *in articulo mortis*, while the infant gets his vision of Christ the instant its

soul departs from its body. The curious feature of the doctrine is that the last act in the drama of personal salvation is thought to be wrought by a certain sort of vision of Christ. The reasoning is far-fetched, and the texts are strained, to support the hypothesis.

Beholding as in a mirror.—Are Christians transformed *by* beholding the Lord? Or are they transformed *while* beholding the glory of the Lord? The text tells us that they are changed *by* the Spirit of the Lord; and consequently the change is wrought *while* they are beholding his glory, and not *by* beholding that glory.

But if it be admitted that the "beholding" is causative of the "changing," where is there any indication in the passage that this beatific vision is had *at death*? But further: if this beatific vision is the last and perfecting act of sanctification, since the infant cannot do the "beholding," it cannot experience the glorifying "change." There is no indication in the text that the infant can do a "beholding" the moment after death which it could not do the moment before death. But further: in order to do the "beholding" the sinful eye must first be opened and consequently the infant must be regenerated the moment before death in order to have the beatific vision. I think therefore that the beatific vision is consequential of sanctification and not causative of it.

4. Dr. Stuart Robinson quotes Rev. xxiii. 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Upon this verse he makes the following comments: "In the vision of the great day John 'Saw the dead *small* and *great*—in the sense of little ones and full grown, as well as of humble and of high position—stand

before God.' And that he saw also corresponding to this fact, 'the *books* opened out of which the dead were judged,' 'according to what was written in the books.' '*And another book was opened, the book of life;*' which can be understood in no other way so clearly, as in the supposition of three classes at the judgment,—believers, and unbelievers, who were judged according to their works, out of the two books, and the little ones, who had done no works, were recorded in a third book specially appropriated to such—a book of life."—*Discourses of Redemption, p. 97.*

This idea of three books before the Judge on the great white throne—one containing the earthly record of unbelievers, the other the record of believers, and the third a register of infants who had died in infancy, having made no record whatever—while novel and beautiful, must still be held to be too probably fanciful to justify grounding a great faith, even in part, upon it. This all-inclusive phrase—"small and great"—occurs several times in the Apocalypse (Rev. xi. 18; xix. 5), in such connections as to make it clear that the reference is to those who were *small* and *great* in nations and in positions, and not to infants and grown persons. But if it be insisted upon that "small" may refer to children, there is nothing in the text to show that all the "small" ones were written in the book of life. And further: it is easy and natural to construe the Three Books in this way: one contained the story of believers, their works and experiences; the other the story of unbelievers, their lives and deeds; and the third the volume of divine decrees, containing the catalogues of the elect and the reprobate. Or they all could be explained in some other way not mentioned, and so evade the conclusion which Dr. Robinson seeks to draw from them.

5. Many advocates of the salvation of dead

infants rest their cause mainly upon the Abrahamic covenant in the Old Testament and the corresponding Baptismal covenant in the New Testament. Appeal then is made first to that primary charter of the Church which made provision for infants as well as for adults: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. . . Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. . . Every man-child among you shall be circumcised, . . and it shall be for a token betwixt me and you. . . And the circumcised man-child . . shall be cut off from his people" (Gen. xvii. 7–14). This charter which has governed the Church through the entire Mosaic dispensation was not repealed but republished on the day of Pentecost when the New Testament dispensation was launched with an inaugural discourse by Peter: "The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 39). Again he said: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed" (Acts iii. 25). Paul also quotes and argues from the Abrahamic covenant to support important conclusions in the Gospel system. (Gal. iii. 8,16,39).

This original charter of the Church, otherwise called the Abrahamic covenant, made two classes of persons charter-members of the ecclesiastical institute—(1) believers, and (2) their children. During the Patriarchal dispensation believers and their children were recognized as lawful members of the Church, and as such were officially signed and sealed by circumcision. During the Mosaic dispensation of the charter the rights of these two classes of persons

were recognized and sealed as in the previous dispensation. During the Christian dispensation these same persons must be held to have charter-rights in the Church of God on earth, unless it can be shown that the charter has been radically altered, disfranchising a large percentage of the original members (infants), or some new charter has been promulgated ousting all the children of believers. There is no New Testament record of any amendments, nor of any repeal, nor of any new charter; on the contrary, on the day of Pentecost Peter appealed to the old charter, saying, "The promise is to you and your children." The New Testament furnishing no ouster of the children of Christians, they must be held to be still charter-members of the Church with all the rights and privileges of membership in the Church of Christ; and herein pædobaptists have a good and solid ground for administering the right of baptism to the infants of Christian parents.

Every adult under the old economy who professed Judaism, whether he was a born son of Abraham, or a stranger from the Gentile world adopted in the Jewish family, was, on account of that credible profession of Judaism, to be treated and dealt with as a Jew. It was his profession of Judaism which entitled him and his children to the right of circumcision; circumcision did not make him a Jew; it was the sign and seal of a Judaism which already existed, and which made circumcision right and proper. The moment Abraham became a Jew by the covenant call of God, that moment two rights accrued to him: (1) the right to all the privileges and distinctions of Judaism, including the sign and seal of this new relation, and (2) the right of Isaac to the same rights and privileges. But Judaism was a type—a symbol and emblem and figure of a spiritual Christianity: the old was but a type of the new. So construing it, we may apply the reasoning in this mode:

The moment a man accepts the gospel and believes in Christ that instant two rights accrue to him—(1) all the privileges and ordinances of the Christian Church for himself, and (2) the same rights and privileges for his minor children. One of the greatest of these privileges and rights which he may claim for his minor child is the right of baptism, together with the Church's nurture and admonition and instruction. Now let us suppose that the child of this Christian parent dies in its minority; that the father has been faithful to the covenant in which he transacted not only for himself but for his irresponsible child also, whom, under the providence and ordination of God, he legally and truly represented; it is clear, under these suppositions that the father's faith and obedience entitle him to claim salvation, in the name of the covenant, for his dead offspring. The parent was not only the natural but the federal sponsor for his minor children; when he accepts Christ, he does so not alone for himself, but for his children also; the father's act avails for the child so long as the child is incompetent, and the father is its legal and divinely recognized representive and agent. It is clear that in this mode a Christian father brings not only himself but his minor children also into covenant relations with God; and if the child dies in its minority, the benefits of the covenant may be logically held to accrue vicariously to him; but if the child lives to the age of self-action, and self-responsibility, his relations to the covenant cease to be vicarious and become personal. Coming to majority, he must ratify the covenant transaction for himself, or lose all the benefits, for, because he is of age, he cannot longer stand upon the faith and obedience of his father.

This argument seems to me to be strong and plausible for the salvation of a particular class of dead infants, namely—the children of Christian

parents, or the children of the covenant; but, by implication at least, it suggests that the dead children of unbelievers and pagans are lost. At any rate, the reasoning fails to indicate any basis upon which the uncovenanted children who die in infancy are saved. It may be argued, with much plausibility, that only Christian parents are entitled to the comfort and joy of knowing that it is well with their dead children, because they only accede to the gospel; that uncovenanted children dying in infancy are saved, but God has purposely withheld from the Church and the world the evidences of their final salvation as an installment of penalty upon the ungodly for their rejection of the gospel. If this reasoning be sound, then the Scriptures must be held to teach the certainty of the salvation of covenanted children dying in infancy, while they are silent about the final destiny of uncovenanted dead infants. If this is all they teach with assurance, Christain faith must be content with the revelation of God and decline to dogmatize about the final fate of the overwhelming majority of dead infants. I think, however, the Scriptures give us data which enable us to go beyond this negative hope concerning dead uncovenanted children, and warrant our setting up such a system of doctrine as logically and necessarily implicates the certain salvation of every child which dies in its moral minority, whether its parents be Christian or pagan.

Any such theology as would yield safely to our hands the doctrine of the universal salvation of infants dying in infancy, and at the same time be true and faithful to the Scriptures, must recognize and construe the following propositions:

1. All infants dying in infancy are by nature guilty and depraved.

2. All infants dying in infancy, if saved at all, are saved by the atonement of Christ, and in no other way.

3. All infants dying in infancy, if saved at all, must be regenerated and sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

4. All infants dying in infancy, if saved at all, must be saved by an application of redemption to them prior to death.

All schemes devised to explain the salvation of dead infants by dodging any of these propositions must necessarily be foredoomed.

CHAPTER IV.

The Sinlessness of Infants.

Pelagianism is a distinct and distinctive type of theology. As a completed system, it has been formed by accreting and articulating the implicates and inferences from sundry premises, which have from time to time been adopted by a class of off-color thinkers upon the subject of religion. Its sectarian forebears were the Ebionites in the Antenicene, the Arians and Semi-arians in the Nicene, periods of church history. Its successors are to be found in Socinians, Humanitarians, and the whole rationalizing and sentimentalizing party of religionists throughout Christendom. The modern Unitarians are, perhaps, the clearest representatives of *organized* Pelagianism.

This system plants its major premise in the bosom of the child, and grounds its doctrine of infant salvation in the *sinlessness of the child*. There is consequently nothing in this moral negative to provoke the punitive wrath of God—nothing in the moral character or life of the child which can be construed as a point of impact for the divine displeasure. On the contrary, the very creaturehood and childness of this potential but undeveloped human being constitute a reason for divine approbation and complacency. The innocency of this creature is the rationale—*the raison d'etre*—of its salvability.

Man, as man, is neither sinful nor holy. As he came from the hand of his Maker in the beginning, and as he makes his appearance in generation after generation, he is a *moral negative.* The fall of Adam introduced no change of any kind into the souls or bodies of his posterity, but each individual is held to be born into the world as Adam was created—*morally colorless.* Being thus characterless, each individual after birth comes to a period of moral adolescence, when, by his own voluntariness, he makes his own character, and decides his own destiny. As he comes from the hands of his Maker, each soul is a *tabula rasa*—a blank sheet of paper—and is himself the responsible penman of all the writing which is ever written upon the sheet of life. The divine judgment of condemnation must consequently be held in abeyance until he has inscribed something offensive upon the pages of his life by his own voluntary and responsible hand.

Pelagius said: "All good and evil, by which we are praiseworthy or blameworthy, does not originate with us, but is acted by us. We are born capable of either; we are not born full (of character); we are procreated without holiness and also without sin; before the action of his own individual will, there is nothing in man but what God has created." "Children, so long as they are children, that is before they do anything by their own will, cannot be punishable."—*Shedd's History of Doctrine, Vol. II., p. 94.*

All infants, by this school of religious expositors, are held to be by nature pure and stainless, free from every trace of "original sin;" without a "corrupt nature" when born into the world; having no "sinful inclination" towards a life contrary to the divine ideal; destitute of that "native depravity" which gives a constitutional bias towards an evil career, more or less wicked in its development. The fact of infant depravity is flatly denied. Leaving out of consideration "environment," which is external to

the soul and in no way one of the inner forces of life-development, every sinful adult is held to be an instance of an absolute commencement in immorality and ungodliness. The will of each infant, undetermined from within, on reaching the age of discretion and choice, elects a course in evil, which was in every instance avoidable. Every infant infolds within himself either a sinful or a sinless life, and there is in no child the momentum of an inbred *vitium* which impels him to the choice of evil. The power of his will is held to be autocratic and self-determining; the underlying character is held to be morally colorless; and consequently every sinful adult is but the product of his own moral and sovereign autocracy. All moral character is, therefore, *ab initio*, the creation of a will-power, purely and absolutely. The Creator gave the infant nothing but sheer power; no original aptitudes, appetencies nor inclinations; the adult is always and absolutely self-made and self-characterized.

These being the premises, it logically follows from them that every child is salvable just because it is not damnable, because of the negative condition of its soul.

These premises in the Pelagian argument are fallacious: *the infant is not a moral negative.*

1. If he were, he could never be anything else. There is a metaphysical law of inertia which reigns as persistently in the realm of mind as does the physical in the realm of nature. It is an indisputable postulate of physics, that a body at rest cannot put itself in motion, or being in motion cannot put itself at rest. Similarly a character which is non-moral cannot make itself moral, nor can a character which is moral change itself into one which is non-moral. The moral can become the immoral, and the immoral can become the moral, but there can be no transmutation of the species moral into the species non-moral,

nor *vice versa*. The nature of the horse is non-moral; this animal can never develop a conscience. The nature of man is essentially moral; he can never obliterate conscience.

Every infant which lives to the years of discretion develops into a moral being of some sort: he was, therefore, a moral being in the beginning, and did not become an ethical creature by the process of growth and expansion. If moral at the very beginning of life, he was either good or bad to start with; no neutral.

2. Every moral being is either good or bad, because these are the only two varieties of moral quality. There can be no such concept as a morality which is neither right nor wrong—a morality which is destitute of all moral quality and therefore colorless and indifferent. It would be equal to an effort to form a concept of a triangle which has neither sides nor angles, but, on the contrary, a triangular negative. A moral negative is just as unthinkable as a triangular negative. A geometrical figure which is not triangular is conceivable, but a triangular figure which is not a triangle is a contradiction; so a creature which is not moral is perfectly conceivable, as a tree or a horse; but a moral being, such as the infant, which is a moral negative is a contradiction. If the infant be a moral being at all it must be either morally good or morally bad; a moral negative is inconceivable. That the infant was a moral being at the beginning is proved by the fact that it always grows to moral responsibility; but its morality at the beginning of life could not be neutral, neither good nor bad, because there is no such concept as colorless morality; therefore the child, at the beginning of life, is either morally good, or morally bad; it is a moral positive of some sort.

3. The Pelagian admits that the infant is a moral creature, but affirms that its moral nature exists only

as a potency—a latency to be developed by experience. That is, the infant as infant possesses, not moral character, but only moral faculty and capability.

But since the moral is always either good or bad, the moral faculty must be either a good faculty or a bad faculty. If it is held to be a morally good faculty, the moral potentialities in the infant are good; and if this faculty be held to be morally bad, then the moral potentialities of the infant are bad. A moral faculty, or potency, or aptitude, or capability, which is a moral negative, is just as contradictory and impossible to consistent thought as a moral character which is a moral negative. If the potential latencies are good, the child ought to develop into a good man; if they are evil, he ought to develop into an evil man. As a matter of fact the outcome in adulthood is always more or less wicked.

4. The Scriptures make the same explanation when they lay down the proposition, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The Redeemer said, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Again, he reasoned: "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." Again, he laid down the broad proposition: "Make the tree good, and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt. For a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

If, then, man is as his heart, what sort of a man would he be whose heart is a moral negative? If life issues from the heart, what sort of a stream would that be which flows from a negative fountain? If the fruit is like the tree, what sort of fruit would grow on a tree which is a negative—neither this, that, nor the other kind of tree? The fruit would be neither this, nor that, nor some other sort, of fruit. If an infant is a moral negative, the man into whom this infant grows would, according to the reasoning

of Christ, himself be a moral negative; but there is no such character in reality.

5. God did not create Adam a moral negative, but a moral positive. He was created in the image of God; and certainly the Deity is no moral negative, but is as immanently and necessarily holy as he is infinite and self-existent. God's moral character is not the product of his will, but his will is his faculty by which he expresses in acts the holiness of his eternal and uncreated nature. The Scriptures expressly teach us that Adam was created, not a moral negative, but positively holy. His character was not fixed, but it was mutable; and that there might be a probation, his Maker gave him the *potestas peccare* —the power to sin, the power to convert his holy nature into an unholy nature. He was not a moral negative to begin with, but from the first positively holy; in exercising the power to sin, he did not convert himself into a moral negative, but he changed himself into a being positively evil in all the appetencies of his nature.

Adam was either, (1) the federal head of the race, or (2) the realistic head, or (3) the parental head. All three of these theories of his connection with the race have been held and ably expounded. Whichever one be adopted, it is impossible to conceive of his seed being moral negatives.

If Adam was the federal head of the race, then he pactionally and legally determined the moral characters of his children so that none of them can be undetermined moral negatives.

If he was the realistic head of the race, no child made out of the Adamic substance, either by generation and traduction or by creation, can be a moral negative, for the very "stuff" out of which the child is made is depraved.

If he was the parental head of the race, the child derived from him by genetic transmission cannot be

sinless and morally negative, because the law, "like begets like," rules all generative processes.

Any theory as to the connection of Adam and his children precludes the idea of any of his descendants being moral negatives, because the head, whatever his aboriginal moral character, became positively guilty and depraved prior to the birth of any of his children. They cannot, therefore, be either *legal*, or *realistic*, or *filial*, derivates from him without participating in his moral character, which was not negative but depraved. The connection, whatever its nature, *ex necessitate*, implicates his posterity so that they cannot, as infants, begin their life as moral negatives. If federalism explains the mode of the transmission of our Adamic inheritances, children are federally sinful. If realism is adopted as the theory of explanation, then they are substantively sinful; if parentalism be the theory which best interprets the case, they are genetically sinful. In any case, in every case, the offspring of Adamic paternity must be qualified as sinful by nature; and as thus handicapped they come to the moment of adulthood.

6. That infants are not moral negatives is further proved by the fact that they invariably develop into sinful men. The Scriptures allow no exception to the general judgment that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The common observation criticises every man as morally defective, more or less, and this criticism is no slander of the race. The Pelagian claims that there have appeared among the race some sinless adults; but, if this claim were fully allowed, the instances are so few and debatable as to serve only to emphasize the rule, namely, that all babies grow into sinful men. This is the custom, in spite of all efforts the wisdom of the ages has made to so surround and protect and nurture the child as to prevent him from becoming a sinful man. These

efforts are, at most, only hinderances; they do not effectually prevent the child from becoming a sinful adult. The result is inexorable; every child is incorrigible.

But is it not just possible that the charge—that every human being who has arrived at the age of moral consciousness has committed some or more overt acts of transgression of the law of God—is a Calvinistic libel upon the race? What are the proofs of this wholesale generalization?

(1) It is sustained by express Scripture assertion. "There is no man that sinneth not" (I Kings viii. 46). "In thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2). "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. xx. 9). "Surely there is not a righteous man on the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not" (Ecc. vii. 20). "There is none righteous, no, not one. . . There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10,12). "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I Jno. i. 8). This is an indictment drawn against the race, and God is no slanderer.

(2) That all men are sinners is implied in the doctrine that they all need atonement. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). "God now commandeth all men, everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). The gospel call is to all men just because all men need the gospel.

(3) The universality of sinning is further witnessed to by the universal prevalence of the priest and his sacrifice. Wherever man has been found, there is the altar and a thousand bloody victims, the basin and a thousand ablutions. There is something in man—call it *fear* or what you please—which drives him in his heathenish darkness, as well as in the

noonday of his culture and civilization, to seek to placate the Being whom he feels to be above him. What is this but religious ritual, however gross or however ornate, proclaiming in the mute eloquence of its own ceremonial that no man is right with God?

(4) Drop down into your own consciousness, and what is the testimony of your own conscience but that you have come short of moral perfection in thought, word and deed? Are you worse than other men? As far as your experience and observation go, have you ever met up with the man whom you are willing to pronounce faultless? In these censures upon your fellow-men are you not morally certain that you are neither a fool nor a slanderer of your kind?

(5) The proverbs of the race are general judgments which mankind feels are indisputable. It is proverbial that "no man is perfect," and that "every man has his weak point." Seneca said, "We are all wicked. What one blames in another he will find in his own bosom. We live among the wicked, ourselves being wicked." Goethe said, "I see no fault committed which I too might not have committed." Dr. Johnson said, "Every man knows that of himself which he dare not tell to his dearest friend." (These quotations are taken from Strong's Theology, p. 297). Are these false and calumnious judgments which the common sense of mankind leads it to pronounce upon itself? Are they the mere expressions of humility, real or mock, which leads the race to speak in moral depreciation of itself? Are they not rather the true voicings of the race's deep and unavoidable conviction that there is something radically wrong with the moral life of us every one? For long years mankind has been the study of man, and these proverbs are some of the final conclusions of the study.

(6) Human history fails to discover but one sinless character, Jesus of Nazareth, in all its recorded annals and biographical portraitures. He shoots up among men as a Great Exception. To explain him, his birth is said to have been of a virgin by the power of the Holy Ghost; the stars stood still over his cradle; the angels burst forth from the galleries of the skies at his advent; and the wise men of the earth brought to him votive offerings of frankincense and myrrh. At every point the supernatural is invoked to explain how it came to pass that this Babe—contrary to all the laws of nature—developed into a man "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." If it were not the rule for men to be bad, why should this instance be *singular*, and provocative of so much wonder and amazement? The world's astonishment at the sinlessness of Christ is proof that his character was contrary to rule.

The uniformity and persistence of any result demand for its explanation a uniform and persistent cause. Why then do all children grow to be sinful adults?

It is easy to explain why all ducklings take to the water without any precedent teaching—it is their nature to do so. It is easy to explain why the young lions eat flesh, or young calves eat grass, each instinctively and spontaneously—it is their nature to do so. It is easy to explain why sparks fly upward, or water runs down hill—it is their nature to do so. All children take to sinning when they reach the years of discretion, with that ease and spontaneousness, whoever their parents and whatever their home training, with which the duckling swims in the water, the young lion eats the lamb, the young calf eats the grass, the sparks fly up and water goes down: why? The answer is easy—it is the child's nature to do so.

If the infant David was not a moral negative, but

on the contrary was "shapen in sin and conceived in iniquity," we have an adequate and rational explanation of the adult David's career in sin—he was following the lead of his nature. If the apostle's judgment concerning the Ephesians, "by nature the children of wrath even as others," be accepted as a general deliverance concerning the race, we have a sufficient explanation of the fact that all infants make sinful men in spite of everything which can be done to the contrary—they but follow the bent of their moral natures.

But some Pelagianizers delight to tell us that *environment* is an adequate explanation of the universality of sin. The infant is a moral negative in himself, but then, we are told, he is surrounded by an evil environment, and that circumstances, not his nature, cause him to grow into a sinful man. But if we make the circumstances the most favorable possible; if we isolate the child as near as it is possible to isolate any human being; if we separate him from the wicked and surround him with the godly and pious; still he grows up true to the sinful type. But the Pelagian replies that isolation is never complete, and that the elimination is never entire; that an ineradicable element in his environment is his wicked ancestry as well as his imperfect associates; but what is all this but saying that a child's development into a sinful man is *necessary*, and that the necessity is not *ab intra*, but *ab extra*—that it is not a necessity of his internal nature but that it is a necessity of his external nature and adventitious surroundings? Has anything been gained in the way of ethics, or perspicuity, by shifting the responsibility for an infant invariably becoming a sinful man from the infant himself as the cause to the external surroundings of the infant? If it is environment that damns, it is environment that ought to be punished, and environment that ought to be redeemed.

At most environment is but the occasion; it is the will of the infant which is the cause of a sinful manhood. Why does the child choose to allign itself with a sinful environment always and stubbornly? Can it be for any other reason than that there is in the heart of the child, behind and below his will, an appetence for sin—an instinctive and impulsive desire to be in harmony with, and not out of sympathy with, an untoward environment?

This problem lies at the Pelagian's door: If the human will has autocratic power, and is intrinsically without moral bias, why does that will always sympathize with an immoral environment, and show an aversion to a holy environment, so that the baby always becomes a bad man, more or less? There are two conditions of sympathy: (1) community of nature, (2) community of experience. The infant, as soon as it reaches the years of responsible self-determination, without tuition and against advice and entreaty, straightway sympathizes with the ungodly, and has an aversion to the righteous. Why this election? Why the persistency and invariability of this election? Why this sympathy? Why this all-controlling sympathy? There can be but one philosophical and scientific answer, namely, a community of nature makes the life of the ungodly congenial and attractive to the maturing infant. They all go that way; and naught but supernatural grace ever causes one of them to go in the opposite direction.

Why? Predicate a bad heart, and we have an adequate explanation for a persistent bad development; but predicate a heart which is a moral negative, and there is no adequate explanation of the universal and persistent development of infants into men of one degree or another of evil. It is from the uniformity and persistency of phenomena that science and philosophy generalize laws and principles.

7. The death of the infant is proof that the child is not a moral neutral, but on the contrary positively sinful.

Herod has for centuries been held up to obloquy and piloried as an inhuman monster for his slaughter of the innocents; but what are we to think of God, who causes, or permits, the death of countless millions of children who cannot discern between their right hand and their left, upon the theory that infants are innocents? Some in ancient Israel thought him to be a "bloody God" because they misunderstood him. The superlative desideratum at this point is a theodicy which can vindicate the divine administration. To do so, at least approximates the impossible, upon the hypothesis that infants have no sort of connection with sin.

In the divine ordination sin and death have been connected as cause and effect, so that where we see the one we can infer the other. When the race stood at the very beginning of its career, God said to Adam: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He ate; death, from that day to this, has followed upon the heels of the race, with drawn sword. The mood of the Old Testament Scriptures has been one of lamentation over the havoc of death among the sons of men. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," looks out of the Scriptures and of providence as an inviolable statute of the divine government over men. The apostle announces the principle in the language of the market-place: "The wages of sin is death." Again, it is written, "Lust, when it has conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished brings forth death." Finally, the inspired messenger of God informs the world that "the sting of death is sin." What else can be the cause of all this threnody of life, but sin? But for its entry in human history not a sigh would ever have been heaved, not a pang would ever have been felt, not a

groan would ever have been heard, not a shroud would ever have been made, not a grave would ever have been dug. But the house of Rachel is desolate and full of weeping; and the surface of the earth is ridged with the graves of children. Does it all mean the massacre of the *innocents*? A dead infant is a phenomenon to be accounted for: to do it, shall we portray God as a Moloch? And if he causes the children—moral neutrals to pass through the fires—what shall become of us who are old in the ways of sin, and deserve to die?

I hate death; I hate it everywhere—in garden, meadow, swamp, and human home; it violates every noble thing in me; it is a death's head which makes me shudder in every fibre of my being; it is a repulsive thing which makes me recoil in terror upon myself; it shadows all my ideas, and plunges me into companionship with worms that crawl and gnaw in the darkness of the grave; it is the one thing that tempts my frightened soul to cry out, "God owes me an apology for giving me life, if I, and all things else, must die." Why must any human being lie down and die? Why must any darling suckling, just budding into life, be strangled in pain and terror? I know my Saviour can overrule, and transform, and transfigure death, and make it the porter that shall fling open the gates to Life, immortal, blessed for evermore. But the thing in itself is an unmitigated horror—a hideous abnormality in human history—a dreadful incubus sitting upon the chest of adult and infant, glaring with glassy eyeballs and clutching throats with bony fingers.

The conscience, awakened by the law of God, must look at death—not at its frightful physical, but at its profound moral, meaning. And what is death's awful meaning, not to the human sensibility, but to the human *conscience*? In the presence or the moral faculty, it raises its ghostly form to say, "*I am*

the wages of sin." In death the divine judgment comes home to conscience. Sin lies at the base of the tragedy of life. And yet they tell us that an *innocent* babe can die?

But there is a current test upon this point, which has been more than a Roman highway in all theology: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. For until the law sin was in the world; but sin was not imputed where there was no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. v. 12–14). This text is so crucial that I shall call to my aid in its interpretation some evangelical authorities.

There is no commentary on the Romans equal to Haldane's. He writes on this place:

"If death comes through sin, then all who die are sinners. This proves contrary to Mr. Stuart's view, that infants are not sinners in Adam. . . If infants did not participate in the guilt of Adam's sin, they would not experience death, disease, or misery, until they themselves become actual trangressors. Whoever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off? . . Death reigned from Adam to Moses over all the human race, even over *infants* who did not actually sin, but sinned in Adam. . . If the reign of death proves the reign of sin in such persons, must not the reign of death over infants equally prove the reign of sin? If the death of adults before the time of Moses was a proof of their being sinners, then of necessity the death of infants must prove the same thing. If death does not prove sin in infants, it cannot prove sin in any. If infants may die, though they are not sinners, then may adults die without being sinners."

The great federalist, Charles Hodge, expresses his interpretation in this language:

"*And death by sin;* that is, death entered the world, men became subject to death, *by means of*

sin. Sin was the cause of death; not the mere occasional cause, not the efficient cause, but the ground or reason of its infliction. . . It is plain that *thanatos* (death) here includes the idea of natural death, as it does in the original threatening made to our first parents. . . This is admitted by the majority of modern commentators—not only by such writers as Tholuck, Olshausen, and Phillippi, but by others of a different class, as DeWette, Kollner, Ruckert. . . *Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* . . That is, death reigned over those who had not personally sinned, just as it reigned over Adam. . . The single doctrine and argument of the apostle is, that there are penal evils which come upon men antecedent to any transgression of their own; and as the infliction of these evils implies violation of law, it follows that they are regarded and treated as sinners on the ground of the disobedience of another."

Adam sinned personally and consciously; infants sin impersonally and unconsciously in their first father Adam; and herein is the precise point of dissimilarity of their sinning and Adam's sinning; nevertheless death reigns over infants as over adults.

Meyer, than whom none is superior in getting at the grammatical meaning of the text, says:

"The *thanatos* is physical death. . . Because when *Adam* sinned, *all* men sinned in and with him, the representative of entire humanity; death, which came into the world through the sin that had come into it, has been extended to *all* in virtue of this causal connection between the sin that had come into existence through Adam and death. *All* became mortal through Adam's fall, because this having sinned on the part of Adam was a having sinned on the part of *all.*"

Dr. Stifler, the professor of exegesis in a Baptist Theological Seminary, in his very suggestive commentary, writes these words:

"Death is consequent on sin, and so death passed upon all men because all men sinned in Adam. . . But now the fact is that death reigned, had sovereign,

undisputed sway, during all the no-law period from Adam to Moses. In all this long period death came to those who had 'not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;' that is, they had not broken any formal command. Many more irresponsible babes died in the flood than men. If, then, death is the penalty of some law broken, and these had none, it follows they broke the first law: they sinned in Adam."

Dr. Stevens, professor of New Testament criticism in Yale University, reduces his exposition of this passage in these words:

"The order of thought then is, (a) sin entered the world by Adam's trespass; (b) death, sin's invariable penalty, followed; (c) in accordance with this connection between sin and death, death became universal; (d) because all sinned. . . All sinned when Adam sinned; all sinned in and with his sin."—*Pauline Theology, pp. 127, 129.*

Dr. Agar Beet, a British Wesleyan, says:

"The universality of this moral disorder suggests irresistibly a moral fault in human nature. . . In other words, the nature common to all men and received at birth contains in it a tendency to sin. . . Whence came this universal moral defect in human nature? . . 'Through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death.' . . This first sin of the first man was the source of the tendency to evil which all inherit by birth."—*Life in Christ, pp. 25–28.*

By the side of these comments from sundry sources of exegetical and dogmatical type, let us put the following italicised pronouncement of Bishop Foster of the Northern Methodist Church: "*Sin is something which the individual man does; it is an act. There is no sin where there is no sinner, and there is no sinner where there is not an act committed by him which constitutes him a sinner,*"—*Sin, p. 33.* This extract announces doctrine in the teeth of all the others; and it can be due to

nothing less than the doctrinal straits into which this author finds himself in his effort to support certain Palagian theories of the human will.

It may be accepted, on exegetical grounds, as a dogma of Scripture, that *death is the proof of the sinfulness of those who die.* Death may be construed as retributive and penal in its nature, and then it would strike its roots down into sin considered as *guilt;* or it may be regarded as disciplinary and chastising in its nature, and then it would find its explanation in sin considered as *imperfection.* But how can the *innocent* suffer either a punitive or a corrective death? If they are innocent, they cannot be justly punished; and if they are innocent, they cannot be purged of a taint which confessededly does not exist. A dead infant is in some sense a sinful infant, if God's administration be absolute and righteous: there cannot be the effect without the cause.

6. The Scriptures dogmatically assert that the infant is not a moral neutral, but, on the contrary, is blemished at birth with an internal *vitium* which insures a development into a manhood more or less deflected from the moral ideal. To sustain this proposition anti-Pelagian texts must be paroled from the Scriptures.

(1) Some texts represent human life as being cast in the mould of sin. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5). David thus traces the history of his sinfulness back to his mother's womb, and finds that his heart and mind and soul and life were cast in the mould of sin, and shaped primarily in the forms of depravity: vice was congenital with him. It is cheap to say that David, in the intensity of his penitence, exaggerated his moral condition, but such a method of destroying the proving value of this text would destroy the whole historicity of the narrative by simply declaring it to be a Davidic exaggeration. No

sober reader can be persuaded to see such specialism in the story of Israel's greatest king. Clearly the infant David was not a sinless child.

The second text of this class fortifies the first. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born speaking lies" (Ps. lviii. 3). The only rational estrangement from the very birth, and straying into sin as we are born, lies in the truth of native and congenital depravity. Why does a child go to speaking lies as soon as it can talk? Is the Psalmist slandering human nature in its infancy, when he so severely arraigns it? Why does the tree bring forth corrupt fruit? Why does the the young fig bush bear figs, the bramble vine bramble berries, and the grape vine grapes? A law of nature rules these productions. And so a like spiritual law of moral depravity rules the normal and persistent development of human conduct in evil. The mould of David's character is the cast of all infants—they go to sinning straight from the womb.

In the third text of this group, Isaiah says of the entire house of Israel what David had said of himself and of all other children: "I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb" (Isa. xlviii. 8). This can mean nothing but that there was something in the people of Israel which caused them to be "transgressors from the womb"—some congenital inborn propensity to go away from and against their Maker and Ruler. The infant activities of Israel's heart are portrayed as evil and that persistently.

In the fourth passage of this class Paul says of the Ephesians and of all men that they are by nature carnal and lustful: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). There is then a defect, a

vitium, in the native heart of all men which leads to an unholy "conversation," and brings into a state of "wrath."

No fair treatment of these texts, and of that class of texts of which they are but specimens, will derive from them a less idea than that there is in human nature a depraved tendency, a natural appetency for sin and transgression. As there is a property of water which causes it to seek its own level, so there is a quality in native humanity which causes it to flow towards sin. These texts undoubtedly teach this much, and it is the only point at this moment under discussion. The birth-cast of the human soul is in sin.

(2) Another class of passages teaches that the heart is the source of all actual transgressions; that here in the inner depths of human nature is the well-head of all the multiform and manifold evils which make their appearance in human history. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. vi. 5). "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. viii. 21). "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job xiv. 4). "What is a man that he should be clean? and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job xv. 14). "Abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water" (Job xv. 16). "The Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. xiv. 2,3). "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?" (Prov. xx. 9). "That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of Spirit is spirit" (Jno. iii. 6). "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or

figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 16–18). "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12).

These texts are all proverbs. They are truths which have set themselves in stereotyped words and live upon the lips of everyone. Such sententious sayings and pithy aphorisms express the best authenticated judgments of our race—truths so true that nothing can be truer. The race has taken these thoughts and texts and coined them into homely and indisputable judgments about itself. Everything partakes of the quality of its source; the stream is like the fountain; the fruit is like the tree. From a corrupt source there can be no pure issue. Hence the conclusion that the very fountain of human life and activity is "troubled and corrupt," from infancy itself. The issues of life are evil; and these issues are from the heart, and indicate its congenital moral quality. Hence the relish for sin, the appetence for evil, the drinking of iniquity like water. That psychology which fails to build upon these premises, and that philosophy of life which fails to construe and plan for the operation of this "abominable and filthy" appetency must be both misleading and inadequate and full of heresy. The anthropology of the Scriptures is clearly developed from the idea that there is a corrupt fountain flowing from the deepest moral recesses of the heart, tainting and perverting every stream of moral and spiritual issue which flows therefrom.

(3) A third class of texts describes the moral nature of human beings since the fall, and creates a certain vocabulary in anthropology, whose use is indispensable in any treatment of the native condition of human nature since the great catastrophe in Eden.

These terms have grown into technical and formal and definitive terms. A few of these phrases are, "evil treasure of the heart," "the corrupt tree," "the heart from which proceed evil thoughts," "the stony heart," "the carnal mind," "the flesh." Translating these ideas from Scripture into the language of philosophical theology, we get such current phrases as these, "corrupt nature," "evil disposition," "apostate will," "depraved heart," "original sin," *et alia*. Formal theology, therefore does little more than merely transpose from the pages of Scripture to its own pages. The idea and thought are unmistakably the same; the slight difference is in language only. This correspondence between the terminology of orthodox anthropology and the Scriptures constitutes an irrefutable argument for the doctrine of native depravity.

(4) A fourth class of passages teaches that there is some inborn defect in the constitutional elements of human nature. No one of these elements as such has been destroyed, but there is in each a something which leads to a perverted and abnormal development of each and every active power of the human being. The body, as the organ of the lowest form of animal and sentient life, has been so affected as to be first the instrument of sin, and second the victim of death. The intellect is represented as "blind." The conscience has likewise been the subject of moral disturbance. Damage has also been done to the sensibilities. The will has been depraved. From all this, the inference must be drawn that there is now a flaw in every department of the human constitution; that there is some disturbing, vitiating, force playing upon every active principle of the heart from birth to death.

The voluminous contentions made by Arminians, Romanists, Mystics and Calvinists for the fact of "original sin," however they may respectively

interpret that fact, lies athwart the Pelagain proposition that infants, idiots and incapables are moral negatives. The *communis consensus* of christendom, while not infallible, has the weight of a venerable presumption, and throws the burden of proof fully upon those who deny any universal doctrine of the Church.

The argument against the position that infants are moral negatives is susceptible of indefinite elaboration and amplification; but what has been said on this point is enough to show that infants, idiots and all moral incapables are not *absolutely*, but only *relatively*, innocent. From one kind of sin they are free; from another kind of sin they are not. They are free from actual sin," but they are not free from "original sin." They are participators in the federal guilt of Adam, and in that corruption of nature which flows down to all persons descended from him by ordinary generation; but they, during their moral minority, do not commit any personal, conscious, overt and voluntary transgressions. The child which lies upon its mother's bosom is, somehow, a sharer in the ancestral history which lies behind it, and will, in due time under proper temptation, reveal what is in him, just as the gutta percha rod, under the friction of a moleskin, yields up the electricity which is latent in it. In its minority the child's sinfulness is latent, in its majority it is revealed and illustrated. Night brings out the stars, does not create them; environment brings out the evil in the heart, but does not create it. The magnetic needle, when released, turns to the pole with unfailing precision; the child, when released from the swaddling bands of infancy, flies spontaneously and delightedly to one form of natural sinning or to another. Babies are not absolutely sinless, but only relatively so.

Hence the effort of Pelagianizers to ground the salvation of dead infants in their sinlessness fails,

because they are not by nature moral negatives; but, on the contrary, have a natural bias towards evil, a connatural appetency for going wrong. The childness of the child is not of such a moral quality as to condition its salvation *ex necessitate*. It is morally pure and innocent only in a comparative degree, for there are the potencies of a multitude of sins wrapped up in each little heart, awaiting the ripeness of the hour when they will reveal themselves in thought, feeling, word or deed. "The child is father to the man;" the man is uniformly sinful, more or less; and "like begets like."

CHAPTER V.

Infants Incapable.

A popular argument for infant salvation lays its major premise in *the bosom of the child;* and reasons from its moral incompetency to its irresponsibility. In a word, the child is salvable, because it is not damnable; and it is not damnable, because it is incapable of moral action.

This argument is developed in two ways:

1. All human life is *probationary.* Probation is defined by the theory as "the moral trial of a free spirit, continuing for a season under conditions appointed by God, and issuing in the confirmation of an abiding and unchangeable state." We are told, that God tests men, the devil tempts men, but men make their own characters and determine their own final destiny. Not Eden, not birth, but the undefined hour of moral adolescence, is the starting point of the strenuous process—the goal being heaven or hell. The disciples of this way of interpreting life give us the schedule of the struggle: "Volitions, acts, habits, character, destiny. Volitions, put forth, result in acts; acts, often repeated, fix habits; habits, long continued, make character; character, when fixed, determines destiny."—*Tillett: Personal Salvation, p. 45.*

During the period of infancy, the child is incapable of executing this probationary programme, and consequently is incapable—of any *destiny,* ought to

be the logical conclusion—of *damnation*, is the inference actually drawn. The infant, in consequence of the immaturity of its faculties, is incapable of entering upon a strenuous, probationary career; and, therefore, cannot bring into being and fix that character which would result in an abiding and unchangeable state of unhappiness.

2. The same conclusion is made to hinge upon the formula, "*Ability is the measure of obligation.*" No person can be held accountable for not being and doing what he is by natural limitation unable to do. "If I can, I ought: if I cannot, I ought not"—this is held to be one of those maxims which the common sense of the race has coined. During infancy the child is congenitally unable to meet the obligations of life, whether those obligations are imposed by nature, by grace, or in any other manner; consequently he is not responsible for any native vitium which may be in his heart, nor for any formal acts of transgression which he commits in his moral minority; therefore he is negatively salvable.

Is this reasoning sound? Has theology done its best to lay a foundation for the salvation of a dead infant, when it grounds the doctrine on the *impotence* of the child? I think not.

I. Life, as to its religious issues, is not probationary. The race is not now on trial. The case has been "called," and heard, and a judgment of sin and condemnation has been entered. Its religious *status* is *res ajudicata*. We are all, infants and adults, prisoners under sentence, awaiting the fateful day of execution. This is but saying, in the figures of the earthly court-house, that ours is a fallen race, and that all its members were involved, somehow, in the moral catastrophe. It is, therefore, utterly fallacious and untrue to fact, to describe the race's destiny as a problem to be solved by "volition, act, habit, character, destiny."

(1) This is true beyond dispute for any theologian who can accept the story of Eden. Adam was a probationer, not as a private person settling his destiny alone for himself, but as a public head, in some sense representing all his posterity, standing trial for them, and defining for them their moral and spiritual status before God. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. . . If through the offence of one many be dead. . . If by one man's offence death reigned by one. . . Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. v. 12–19). In the first probation men were not individual and personal probationers, but God put them upon trial in the person of another, even Adam, and in him and through him and by him the case was issued, and destiny was fixed. The race had its initial probation in another, and *his* "volition, act, habit, character, destiny" became *theirs*. Consequently the question, whether any given individual will be sinful or not, is not in debate. Judgment has been passed upon all. All died when Adam died.

(2) Man was given his second probation in Christ, the Second Adam. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This famous passage means: As all who were in Adam died, so all who were in Christ shall be made alive. But, however, interpreted, the second probation was not personal and conscious, but somehow in and through another, the Adam of Calvary. There is no individual Christian probation. Certainly no Calvinist can hold the contrary opinion. Certainly no Predestinarian can deny that the issue in Christ is unchangeably determined. Certainly no believer in limited atonement, the efficaciousness of grace, and the perseverance of the saints, can consistently hold that Christian life is ever in jeopardy. It is no less certain that the life of the believer is unprobationary

than that the life of the sinner is not conditioned and dependent upon his volitions. If all infants are made potential sinners at their first birth, all who experience it are made potential saints at their second birth. No man ever gives birth to himself. By nature he is born "the child of wrath;" by grace he is born "the child of God." He is in neither case the manufacture of his own hands.

(3) A selection or two from Scripture would seem to put this point beyond debate. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5). If this was the condition of David at the start of his life, how can his moral state be construed as dependent upon the manner of his adult behavior? The foundations of his nature were laid in "sin," and the shape of the superstructure of his life was in "iniquity." The only question, not antenatally settled, pertained to the *degree* and *specific forms* of his sinning. This royal child must grow into a sinful man, because the very beginnings of his life have been so pitched; but—How bad shall he become?—and, What specific forms shall his badness take?—these are the only two questions which are possibly left open. "Volitions, act, habit, character, destiny"—back of them all, and determinative of them all, is David's antenatal mould of sin; and consequently he is no probationer *quoad hoc*—as to whether he will or will not be a sinner. Sin is the first hinge of his destiny; and David was a born sinner. Righteousness was the other hinge of his destiny; and the righteousness of Christ was imputed to David, and defined his destiny for heaven. He was a probationer neither by *nature* nor by *grace*.

Let us further test the question whether men are natural probationers with the case of Esau and Jacob. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works,

but of him that calleth; it was said unto her (their mother), 'The elder shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'" Were these two children religious probationers? The narrative tells us that before they were born before they had personally done either good or evil it had been determined—not by their works, but by the election of God—that the elder should serve the younger—and that Jacob should be the object of divine love and Esau of the divine hate. The question—How can these things be?—must be met; and theology explains these antenatal determinations of destiny by tracing the connections of these two children with the two Adams—the Adam of Eden and the Adam of Calvary.

Not to delay the induction with further citations from Scripture, (this point will come up again in this essay), these instances warrant the generalization that, as to religious destiny, human life is not probationary, problematic, and equivocal, but on the contrary certain and determined. Pelagianism holds man to be a *natural* probationer: Arminianism holds him to be a *gracious* probationer: Calvinism holds him to be *no* probationer at all. If all life is probationary and all destiny is determined *via* "volition, act, habit, character," then, since the infant is incapable as an infant of meeting these conditions, the logical inference ought to be that the infant can have no destiny of any sort, because he cannot travel either way the way that leads to life, or the way that leads to death. Only, therefore, upon Calvinistic presuppositions can an incapable child be conceived of as possibly having a heavenly destiny. As a probationer, he is absolutely impotent; his impotency cannot be construed as the ground of his salvation nor of his damnation, because both these issues are made to hang upon probation—upon "volition, act, habit, character, destiny." If heaven is attainable

only by one sort of walking, and hell by another sort of walking, and the infant cannot do any sort of walking, the result must be that it can go nowhere. The argument leads to the paralysis of all destiny.

II. This argument for the salvation of infants and unfortunates also collapses under criticism because *all sin does not consist in voluntary act.*

Geometricians define a mathematical point as having existence, but no direction; a line as a series of points having two directions; a surface as a series of points having four directions; and a solid as a series of points having every direction—length, breadth, and thickness. The analogue of an act is a point; of a habit a line; of a character a surface: of a life a solid. The whole content of man's history is represented as a series of acts. The Pelagianizers are fond of the catching fallacy: "Sow an act, you reap a habit; sow a habit, you reap a character; sow a character, you reap a destiny." The unit of human history and destiny is thus represented to be an *act;* and individual biography is construed as a mere congeries of acts.

But acts are not original and causative; on the contrary, they are secondary and consequential. Acts are revelatory; deeds are fruits. The fruit does not make the tree, but the tree makes the fruit; acts do not determine character, but character determines the acts. It is what men are that causes them to do what they do, and not what they do that makes them what they are. Conduct is the resultant of character; not character the resultant of conduct. Infants, when they arrive at moral adulthood, do not make themselves sinners by violating God's law, but, on the contrary, they violate God's law because they are sinners. Voluntary transgression is not the cause, but is the effect, of sin in the heart; they *do* sinfully because they *are* sinful. Actual sins but reveal original sin.

All life is but self-expression, and self-development through self-expression. Character is not a deposit of conduct, but conduct is the manifestation of the antecedent character. It is what is in man that comes out in act, and deed, and behavior. The human will is not a creator, but an executive carrying into experience what antecedently existed in nature the administrator of the appetencies of the soul. Any fully developed man, at the end of his career, is but what he was infolded at the beginning of his life. "The child is the father of the man." The man is but the child unfolded; the child is but the man infolded; all experience is but the process of bringing out explicitly in manhood what was implicitly infolded in childhood; the will is but the organ of the development. Manhood, consequently, is not a mere aggregation of *acts*, but the filling out to the full of those potencies which were inwrapped in childhood. Character is developed, not created. No child was ever born with a will strong enough to suppress the contents of his own heart—to prevent a moral miscarriage of his ethical career.

1. This is specifically the philosophy of the Redeemer and his inspired expositors. Both dogmatically and illustratively this "Teacher sent from God" taught the necessity of regenerating the heart in order to obtain a reformation of life and conduct; that is, man must be changed in what he *is* in order to secure a corresponding alteration in what he *does*. "Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." The reason is immediately given: "That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of Spirit is spirit." The developed man must be a duplicate of the undeveloped child: a carnal child cannot become a spiritual man, except upon the predication of a supernatural change in the ground-nature of the child. In consonance with this, the apostle describes

every Christian as "a new creature in Christ Jesus." Our Lord taught broadly the doctrine that "out of the heart are the issues of life;" consequently "the heart" is the source of life, and it is incorrect to represent it as the creation of the acts of life. The Redeemer broadly illustrated his teaching by refering to the well-known relation existing between the fruit and the tree: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Here is a law, common both to the natural and spiritual world, announced by the divine Master, namely, The tree determines the fruit, not the fruit the tree. "Either," he says, "make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit." The fruit then does not cause, but merely reveals, the nature of the tree. Either make the baby good and his life good, or else make the baby corrupt and his life corrupt: by his fruits ye shall judge of the moral quality of the baby when he becomes an adult.

According, therefore, to our Lord's generalization, the fruitage of life does not define the character of life, but *vice versa*, the character of life antecedently determines the fruitage of life. If this be a sound statement of the order, then the Pelagianizers are all wrong when they tell us that *acts*, and their *reactions* upon the soul, are the only things to which moral quality can attach; but the truth is precisely the reverse, and acts and reactions possess no moral qualities *per se*, but derive all their moral value from the precedent and causative moral nature.

While infants, therefore, are incapable of performing acts, to be blamed or rewarded for those acts, yet they may, and must, possess moral characters, which are not products of their voluntary conduct, it

is true, but which are somehow a part of their inheritance from the past. In other words, no man has to first make himself in order to be responsible for the expressions of himself in thought, word, and deed. Character is *causative;* acts are *declarative;* infants are born with characters; at maturity they begin the performance of acts in consonance with their inborn characters; at the end of their careers they will have called out and translated into conduct and experience all the native potencies of their souls. This determination of the matter is in accord with the soundest philosophy of the human will. Concerning this faculty, there are but two ground-forms of theory—Indeterminism and Determinism.

According to the one scheme—indeterminism—the human will is automatic and self-determined; consequently, only the acts of the will, and the deposits in character of those acts, can possess ethical value of any kind; and as infants are incapable of performing this class of voluntary acts prior to their adulthood, they are incapable of being the subject of any moral censure.

According to the other scheme—determinism—the human will is the executive faculty of the soul, and transforms the views of the understanding and the desires of the heart into volitions; consequently all volitions take their ethical complexion from those views and feelings by which they were determined; and, therefore, infants, prior to their adulthood, do possess such latent views and such latent feelings as, in time and experience, determine inexorably their lives to sin and moral folly; and that, somehow, they are blameworthy for these evil potencies of nature.

In other words, according to the determinist, every man must *be* wrong before he can *do* wrong; and he is primarily blameworthy for *being* wrong, and consequently blameworthy for *doing* wrong.

Hence the conclusion of the orthodox philosophy, namely, that the motive—the resultant of views and feelings—determines the morality of every act.

According to the Pelagian theory the will of the infant is *in equilibrio* until the child arrives at a point in its development when, by a decision of its neutral will, it passes from a state of irresponsibility into a state of moral accountability. The passage of the individual from moral and irresponsible childhood to moral and responsible adolescence is, according to this view, effected by the actions of an automatic and achromatic decision of the will.

(1) But the will of the infant was at no time, in all the period of the child's moral minority, *in equilibrio*. The moment a child is born it begins to exercise its intellectual faculty in cognizing things, its sensibility in feeling things, and its will in doing things; all its faculties are active from its very birth, but with infantile feebleness at the beginning. It early shows both willfulness and perversity in its choices and in its refusals; it tells falsehoods as soon as it can speak; it steals sweetmeats as soon as it can climb to the pantry shelf; it manifests disobedience to parental commands as soon as it is crossed in its desires; it displays angry passion and selfishness almost simultaneously with its first cry; yet these early manifestations of sin, we are told, are not to be held to be morally culpable. And why? Certainly not because the child's will during this irresponsible period of life is *in equilibrio*, for that will has been boundlessly active in multiform and manifold choices of evil.

"As soon as children begin to act, they begin to show that self-will and self-affirmation are as natural as thought and reflection—they begin to unfold in their narrow sphere those same tempers and dispositions which, carried over to mature life and transferred to the relations of business and social inter

course, are branded as odious and disgusting vices. Particularly in children does the spirit of self-seeking very early develop itself in the form of self-justification, and make them impatient under rebukes, surly to their superiors, and prone to falsehood as an expedient for maintaining their reputation free from reproach. Augustin has signalized these perversities of his childhood; and those who can recall their childish experience, or who have watched the development of character in other children, can be at no loss for arguments to dispel the common illusion concerning the innocence of childhood. It is true that there is a class of sins, the offspring of experience and of a larger knowledge of the world, from which it is free; it is also free from the corresponding virtues. It has not yet learned distrust and caution - it is marked by a simplicity of faith and freedom from suspicion; but it is equally marked by the principle of self-affirmation, whether the character be gentle and mild or bold and impetuous. The type of sin, which the after life will unfold, begins from the dawn of consciousness to unfold itself."—*Thornwell: Writings, Vol. I., p. 313.*

The infant, like the adult, daily acts according to the way it understands things and feels about things; that is, the resultant of its judgments and its feelings determines its choices. Then why are the childish acts irresponsible? Because it does not reason correctly with its understanding, and does not feel truly with its heart, because both its intellect and its sensibility are infantile and childish. It thinks as a child, and feels as a child, and consequently acts as a child. By and by a time comes when it thinks as an adult, feels as an adult, and acts as an adult: at that hour its moral responsibilities begin. In other words, the transition from irresponsibility to responsibility is effected, not by a balanced will at the adolescent moment becoming decisive, but by all its faculties becoming matured to a certain indefinable degree—by intellect, sensibility, and will attaining to a certain stage in growth.

If a child, five years of age, were to kill his father in angry passion, no court could justly hang him as a murderer, not because at the moment of the killing his will was *in equilibrio*, but because his motive (the resultant of his views and feelings) was constitutionally inadequate, through immaturity, to give the deed the quality of crime. But if the same child, at the age of twenty-one, were to kill his father in passion, he would be adjudged a murderer because his understanding was mature enough to perceive, and his sensibility was developed enough to appreciate, the immorality of the deed. His will was active, elective, and decisive in both cases: in the first he was unfortunate, in the second he was criminal.

Is the distinction between a moral infant and a moral adult in this fact, namely: in the moral infant the will is *in equilibrio*, while in the moral adult the will is *elective*? No; because the infant makes choices as well as the adult; but the distinction is to be found in the quality of the reasonings of the child as contradistinguished from those of the man. It is the condition of the understanding and of the sensibility, lying back of the will, which marks the moment of the attainment of moral accountability. We do not *choose* to become accountable; we are brought up to that line by nature, and by nature thrust across it—out of irresponsible childhood into responsible adulthood. The landing is invariably on the side of sin. "There is not a just man on the earth, that sinneth not."

(2) That the will of the infant is not *in equilibrio* is proved by the fact that, if it were, it could not, at the transitional moment of adulthood, pass out of a state of moral neutrality into a state of moral responsibility by an act of rational and deliberate choice; because the will must choose to change from a state of equilibrium into a state of positive decision; but

to make that choice, it would have to be in an antecedent state of equilibrium; and so on *ad infinitum*. That is, it could never make a free choice, because it would always have to choose.

2. *The Communis Consensus Hominum.*—Those commonsensed and catholic judgments of mankind which render the race balanced and sane—is in accord with this determination of the matter. Motives define the morality of deeds: acts are, in themselves, moral neutrals, except as their motive-causes are taken into consideration. Let us test this generalization by the concrete case of homicide. Suppose the motive was malice, then the homicide becomes criminal. Suppose the motive was self-protection, then the homicide would be laudable. Suppose their was no motive of any kind, then the homicide would be accidental. In each the homicidal act takes its moral complexion from the genetic motive. If the motive was vicious, the deed was vicious; if the motive was virtuous, the deed was virtuous; if the motive was colorless, the deed was colorless. The generalization therefore is justified, namely, that acts take their moral complexion from the antecedent and causative motive. If there be no motive of any sort, no moral pronouncement upon the act can be made. But we are compelled to classify it as unintentional and accidental. Acts, therefore, do not justify the motives, but *vice versa*; and the generalization of the Pelagian, namely, that nothing is sinful but acts, is the very reverse of the truth.

In physics there is the parallelogram of forces. If two equal forces act upon a body at the same time at right angles to each other, the body will take the direction of neither, but will follow the resultant of both, represented by the diagonal of the parallelogram. The human will is always acted upon by two influences—the views of the intellect and the feelings of the heart; and the resultant of these two makes the

motive which determines the direction of the will's action. In homely language, man, when free, always acts as he sees things and as he feels about them; and whenever he so acts, he is responsible for his deeds. It is these causative views and feelings which define the moral quality of the act resulting from them. This is the sheerest common sense; and no philosophy which traverses a canon of common sense can be true, however plausibly or puzzlingly it may be presented.

Men universally attribute vice as well as virtue not only to conscious and deliberate acts, but also to states and dispositions of the heart. The beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are pronounced, not upon acts, but upon certain dispositions of soul, and the curses of the divine law are uttered, not so much against single acts of violation, as upon those views and affections out of which they spring. A motiveless act of theft would be excused, but a theft which was the result of a man's false reasoning and covetous feelings concerning his neighbor's property would be justly punishable. Outward acts are, indeed, only punishable when they are regarded as originating in, and symptomatic of, an evil disposition lying below the surface of the will and controlling that faculty. Upon this principle civil law proceeds, and always makes inquisition for the root of the external deed in the heart before justifying or condemning the accused. The clearer and stronger the connection of the deed and the precedent evil disposition—the more apparent it becomes that the deed was but revelatory of a criminal soul—the more blameworthy is it felt to be. This judgment of course stands, even where we are not able to trace the origin of the evil disposition back to some voluntary act of the will; and it still stands, as just and proper even when we are able to show that the vicious nature was hereditary and constitutional, or was the necessary conse-

quence of unavoidable education and environment. In short, the world does not suspend judgment until it has instituted an inquiry into the history and origin of the evil disposition, but swiftly and inexorably pronounces judgment the moment the motive of the deed is uncovered. Neither the civil courts nor the general public go behind the motive, and hold judgment in abeyance until it can first be determined whether the evil heart was the result of personal, conscious and voluntary transgression of known law, or was a consequence of hereditary bias derived from the generations of the past, or came in some other way different from both. The *origin* of the motive has nothing to do with the judgment passed upon the act. We do not excuse arogancy or sensuality upon the ground that they are family traits; on the contrary, if we find that these vices are inbred, their resultants are the more severely censured. The boy who hates his father is condemnable for the hatred, whether he ever allows that hatred to break forth into acts or not. There is proper swearing, and there is profane swearing; the acts are identical; the difference is in the motive.

If man could foreread the infant heart—the source of all future life—could even he withhold future judgment? But he can know the contents of the heart only as they are disclosed in conduct, and hence must hold judgment, for the want of data, in abeyance until the infant has revealed himself in adult conduct. But God looks upon the heart, and foreknows it, and can forepronounce judgment even upon infants.

3. The Scriptures dogmatically teach that sin is predicable of certain *states* and *dispositions* of the soul as well as of its *acts*. There is a voluntary nature below actual volition. They speak of "evil thoughts" (Matt. xv. 19); of an "evil heart" (Heb. iii. 12); of an anger which is murder (Matt. v.

22); of a lust which is adultery (Matt. v. 28); of a lust which conceives and brings forth sin (Jas. i. 15); of a sin that works all manner of "coveting" (Rom. vii. 8); of a sinfulness which slumbered until the law came (Rom. vii. 10); of a sin which reigns in our mortal bodies (Rom. v. 12).

When, therefore, Pelagians and Pelagianisers ground the salvability of infants in the proposition that sinfulness is attachable only to a specific class of acts, the reasoning is unsound and inconclusive because there are sinful states as well as sinful acts; and these states precede and condition and are genetic of, the acts; consequently infants, while incapable of conscious and personal acts of sin, may be in an evil state, and have in their souls a *vitium*, hereditary or otherwise in its origin, which renders them obnoxious to God's eye. The Pelagian will not have made out his case, even when he has proved that infants are incapable of conscious personal acts of voluntary transgression, because they may be in an infantile *state* of sin, which life and experience will in due time develop into manifold acts of disobedience.

The definition of sin as an act of voluntary transgression of the law is entirely too narrow. "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God." *Nonconformity* is the being or not doing what God requires; *transgression* is the doing what God forbids. Sin is thus predicable of both character and conduct. There is therefore a sinful heart as well as sinful deeds. The infant may have a sinful heart prior to the commission of any sinful deed. Consequently the reasoning from the absence of sinful deeds to the salvation of the infant is fallacious, for the reason that it does not preclude condemnation on the ground of a sinful heart.

III. Ability is not the measure of obligation; and it is therefore fallacious to ground infant salvation

in the child's inabilities: reason demands something more than a mere negative basing of this great and precious faith in what children are not.

(1) The maxim—"Ability is the measure of obligation"—is not absolutely true. In commercial life, it is the opinion of the street and the judgment of chancery, that bankruptcy does not destroy contract. The debtor cannot say to his creditor, "I owed you yesterday because I was able to pay, but I do not owe you today because I am unable to pay." Inability does not wipe out debt; the Rationalist will not apply to his business the principles which he seeks to apply to Calvinism and religion. Again, the drunkard has practiced intemperance until he is bound hand and foot by his habit; but in reply to your entreaty he says, "I am not able to reform, and therefore I am under no obligation to reform." Such ethics would allow a man to convert evil into good, and permit him to earn the right to sin with impunity, by carrying it to a point beyond his control. Again, one is impleaded at the criminal bar for a malicious murder, and he enters this defence, "I was so malicious that I could not control myself, and it is a recognized principle of jurisprudence that ability is the measure of obligation; I was not able to restrain my hand from the throat of my enemy, and therefore I have committed no crime, for where there is no ability there is no sin." These illustrations show that this maxim is not unqualifiedly true; that at least an induced inability to meet engagements and responsibility does not liquidate obligation and discharge from duty.

(2) The maxim—"Ability is the measure of obligation"—is, at best, but relatively true: true only when we take into consideration the cause of the inability. If the cause of the inability is involuntary, then if destroys obligation. If man were destitute of the faculty of reason, he would not be responsible

for being irrational; the brute is not blameable for exercising none of the functions of conscience. If a man were destitute of the faculty of conscience; that is, if his Maker had created him without any moral faculty whatsoever, he would not be accountable for not exercising the functions of conscience; the dog is not responsible for being unethical in his instincts. If man had no will, and that was due to a creative act, he would not be censurable for being mechanical in all activities; the tree is not required to emit free choices. If man were destitute by nature of any particular faculty; or, if possessing all his faculties, their balance and use were destroyed by the Creator's hand, he would not be obligated; the idiot is not morally accountable *per se*. If man were wrought upon by an almighty power, overruling and preventing him from obeying, he would not be chargeable for his disobedience. If he were overpowered by some external force, none would impute his conduct to him. If he had been created morally indifferent, or with a moral proclivity to evil, he would not be blameworthy for the phenomena of his life. If the cause of his inability lies beyond the range of his voluntary faculty, his conduct lies beyond the range of censure. If, however, the cause of his inability is voluntary, and pertains to his will, then it enhances obligation and intensifies guilt. If ability is weakened by a free act of self-determination, obligation is not correspondingly weakened; and if ability is totally destroyed by voluntary action, obligation is not correspondingly destroyed; else the shortest way to discharge duty and be quit of obligation would be to destroy the power to obey. The principle that power once possessed, if voluntarily destroyed, does not *ipso facto* release from the original duty, is recognized by sound writers upon ethics, by jurisprudence, by public opinion, and by the common sense of men.

(3) The maxim—"Ability is the measure of obligation"—was true only at the moment of man's creation, when he was fully endowed with every faculty and power and equipment necessary to meet every duty imposed by his Maker or arising out of his relations to his fellow-men. This maxim has never been true since that creative hour. Positively holy, endowed with plenary power, and favorably conditioned in his entire environment, ability and obligation were exactly equal. God did not require of Adam what he could not do. He (Adam) altered that original ratio between ability and obligation by striking down to zero the left side of the equation, and gave the race a new and fearful formula. God's formula was—Ability=obligation. The substituted formula which Adam gave his posterity is—Inability=obligation. By changing the left-hand term in the equation, he did not change the right-hand side of the formula. This is the historic fact, however we may explain the transmission of Adam's act to ourselves—whether by heredity, or by realism, or by federalism.

(4) The formula of Calvinism—Voluntary inability does not destroy obligation—is indisputable. If permitted to amend the rationalistic and Pelagian formula—Ability is the measure of obligation—so as to read—Concreated ability is the measure of obligation—Calvinism cheerfully admits the truth. The spiritual inability, which is the birth-inheritance of every sinner, is voluntary—not personally and consciously voluntary, but federally, representatively, putatively, ethically, voluntary. This explanation abundantly grounds the morality of the federal theology.

But in addition to this great federal determination of the ethics of sinful inability, no man can personally and consciously control all the forces which play upon his life, make his character, and

shape his destiny. The forces of heredity, the forces of association, the forces of education, the forces of government, the forces of climate, the forces of health, the forces of the satanic under-world, the forces of the angelic upper-world, the forces of error, the forces of truth, the forces of God—these forces, multiform and multiplex, play with, under, by, in, through, behind, before, above, around, beyond, against, across, individual history—syntaxing, collocating, correlating, conjoining, disjoining, negating, affirming, condensing, augmenting, reversing, inverting, deharmonizing, euphonizing, the structure which stands at the end of his career as himself. Nothing less than omniscience is wise enough, nothing less than omnipotence is powerful enough, to play with all these forces with inerrancy and exactitude. The life of the race is a unit; the life of the individnal is a unit. The force that plays at one point, plays to the centre and to the circumference of every part and period of human character. The theory that the individual is responsible for only so much of the contents of his life as he admits by a personal and conscious act of his will is preposterous, unless divine powers and perogatives are assumed. "The way of the man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23).

(5) The maxim—"Ability is the measure of obligation"—destroys the whole Pelagian and rationalistic system in whose interest it was formulated. What a man does, and becomes, is the product of ten thousand forces which criss-cross his career from cradle to grave. Of some of these forces—those of heredity and environment, for example—he has no sort of control, and yet these very forces have largely contributed to the result—the character. How, upon Pelagian premises, is a person blameworthy for a good character, seeing that the result is not the product of his sole voluntary action? Upon Calvinistic

premises he is responsible for himself under the circumstances supposed, because in it all he has been a free agent, expressing in overt act and in expanded career, the appetencies and traits native to his soul and contemporaneous with his birth. It is not essential to responsibility, and to moral answerableness, that a man should first make himself, before he can be held for the expression of himself; all that can be required, as antecedent ground for accountability, is that what has been done should be traceable to a free agent who has acted according to himself.

The conclusion from this reasoning is this: the maxim—"Ability is the measure of obligation"—is not true as it stands in Pelagian anthropology, and as the fundamental ethics of rationalistic ethics. The maxim which Calvinism subscribes and defends—Free agency is the measure of obligation—stands as the fundamental ground of all morality. In the play of all the forces of life, whatever their sources, their number, or their intricacy, man stands out as a free agent, freighted with responsibilities; but he is not at every point and in respect to every matter individually able, and the master of situations. Free agency, not ability, is the universal condition of duty and praise, of guilt and blame.

CHAPTER VI.

The Character of God.

Our conception of the divine character is radical and fundamental in its influences upon our thinking and living. By it our views of the world and human history are determined. All differences in religion and theology are, at bottom, but differences about the nature of God. All sectarian disagreements and controversies have their roots in divergent opinions about the character of the Deity. As little obvious as it may at first appear, every day is dull and prosaic, or bright and radiant, every duty is irksome drudgery or exhilerating delight, every sacrifice is a hard imposition or a joyful oblation, according to the idea about God which we carry around in our bosoms. There are some things about which we can afford to be ignorant, some problems for whose solutions we can afford to wait, but we must know God, the Being with whom we have to do, and who has to do with us. So deeply here is our nature rooted, that this knowledge is absolutely imperative.

A current argument for the salvation of infants lays its *major premise in the bosom of God*, and evolves the reasoning out of a certain conception of divine character. It is fallacious however, because it is a misinterpretation of that character.

They of this way of debating construe the statement of John, "God is love," as an exact, an all-inclusive and an all-exclusive definition of the divine character; and then argue that, inasmuch as love is always an impulse to bless, God is of such a metaphysical nature as to be incapable of inflicting final suffering upon any creature of his hand. There is no such fountain in his bosom as can send forth a stream of punishment; consequently all mankind, (including infants, idiots, and all incapables), are, and must be ultimately salvable. Divine self-consistency necessitates such an issue: without it there could be no possible theodicy.

The New theology, as distinguished from the Old, defines the Deity as *Moral Love*, and then endeavors to interpret creation, providence, sin, redemption, and eschatology in consistency with this conception of the divine nature. Its self-imposed task is to organize the universe—past, present, future, and final,—with this idea of God, as only love, as its genetic and formative and and interpretative principle.

George A. Gordon, minister of the Old South Church of Boston, draws the issue in this language: "The ultimate source of all power and all obligation is the supreme love. The battle of belief and unbelief must finally be settled upon this field. The believer must purge his faith as Gideon did his army; he must exalt the whole series of conceptions that go to form it; he must work it over into pure and consistent moralism, into a scheme that begins and ends in the perfect love of God. Anything less than this outside the sheltered fold of traditional orthodoxy has already become incredible. Anything less than philosophical loyalty to the absolute moralism of Jesus Christ handicaps faith hopelessly, gives skeptical thought an immense advantage, manufactures obstacles against its own success, and indeed creates the

forces that ultimately make its progress impossible." This,—he dogmatizes,—or the alternative is, "the complete abdication of thought."—*Immortality and the New Theodicy, p. 64.*

W. L. Walker, in his book on *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, says: "The Scriptural doctrine is that God *is* love, and 'the Son' must be the same love in one mode of its existence. The love that God *is* is not merely 'the affection of one person for another,' as of individuals, but the holy, universal, infinite love which forever seeks to impart itself, and which causes *all* persons to arise. The Son is that love as it goes forth to impart itself to others conceived in the image of God. The Son of God is at once the ideal and the potency of the creation. The perfect love that God is, just because it is perfect, can never keep itself to itself, but must be eternally giving itself and going forth creating."—*Curtis: The Christian Faith, p. 505.*

Dr. Curtis, professor of Systematic Theology in Drew Theological Seminary (Methodist), has endeavored to organize the whole Christian faith upon the principle that God is "moral love." He says: "My full view is that the final universe is to manifest, in finite measure, the entirety of God's life. To do so much, the final universe must express, not merely the fact of God's moral love, but additionally the fact that this divine love is a *satisfied moral love.*"—*The Christian Faith, p. 509.*

In a little volume of sermons, F. B. Stockdale (Methodist) sums up his conclusions in this fervid and frantic language: "If in the future some restless soul, roaming through the caverns of despair, shall find an argument that will prove that he who provided that place for such as are lost did it in any other spirit than love, then the fires of hell will cease to burn, and angels will pity those for whom the Father of us all has no compassion. The God of

Genesis is love; the God of the gospels is love; the God of heaven is love; and the God of the 'saved' will be the God of the 'lost.' The future holds possibilities of reconciling relationships; but it contains no chance of contradicting the text: 'God is love.' What God is he was; what he was he is and will forever be, and that is—love."—*The Divine Opportunity, p. 39.*

Hortio W. Dresser, a writer of idealistic cast, gives us these pronouncements: "If we accept the premise that man is a 'depraved' being by inheritance, that an angry God must be appeased, and the only begotten Son had to be sacrificed to set things right; then the doctrine of the atonement in its old form is logical, and the followers of this type of Christianity are justified in their life-and-death struggle for what they believe to be the fundamental principle. . . Of course, if 'God is love,' then there are no 'lost' souls in the literal sense of the word, although many may be almost infinitely removed from the knowledge of the truth which sets men free. And, since God is love, he is not the angry Yaveh of a former generation who demands a sacrifice. The idea of offering up a human being in this way belongs to savage times, when men thought they must render tribute to the gods to win their favor. It shows enormous disrespect to the God of love to think that he demands a propitiatory offering. It would be difficult to give to any of Jesus' sayings any such barbarous meaning. Furthermore a God of love is 'no respecter of persons.' He is the Father of the people; there are no 'elect' or 'damned.' It is not a question of fate, but of the way open before those who choose to walk in it."—*The Divine Order, pp. 381, 385.*

Principal A. M. Fairbairn (Presbyterian) says: "God is love; but love is social—can as little live in solitude as man can breathe in a vacum. In order to its being, there must be a subject bestowing love and

an object rejoicing in the bestowment. Absolute and simple loneliness of being would be a state of complete lovelessness. The Godhead means that as the Fatherhood and Sonship have been eternal, so also has the love. It follows, therefore, that creation in its most real and radical sense is the production of a being capable of being loved, and therefore of loving. Man is God's son not simply because God's creature but because of the God whose creature he is. Fatherhood did not come through creation, but rather creation came because of Fatherhood."—*Tillett: Personal Salvation, p. 2.*

Dr. W. F. Tillett, professor in Vanderbilt University (Methodist) enumerates the following nine methods by which Christ made God a lovable being: "1. By revealing him as *the Father*. . . 2. By showing *that love is the leading attribute in God's nature*, and that this divine love takes in the entire human race. . . 3. By revealing *himself as the Son of the Father*, and showing that his Father—who was also our Father—was like him. . . 4. By showing that God *craves our love* first and above everything. . . 5. By revealing the *inseparable connection between love and holiness*. . . 6. By teaching us that *God is Good*. . . 7. By teaching the *accessibility of God to every creature*. . . 8. By teaching the *perfect fidelity of God*. . . 9. By teaching that the *Father is seeking the sinner*."—*Personal Salvation, pp. 10–14.*

Dr. J. A. Beet, a British Arminian, puts this doctrine in this form of words: "Love then is the central attribute of God. The other moral attributes are but the same looked at from various limited points of view. The natural attributes describe the infinite resources at the disposal of infinite love. These resources love needs for its full manifestation. In God we have infinite love prompting and controlling every thought, word, and action, and armed with

infinite knowledge and wisdom and power."—*Life of Christ, p. 289.*

J. M. Gibbon, an English preacher of light and sweetness, says: "That 'God is love,' is not one side of the truth, but the whole truth about God. There is no other side. No addition is possible. The leaf, we are told, is the stem expanded—the stem is the leaf closed. The text is theology closed. All theology is this text expanded. Love is not *one* of the attributes of God, but the sum of them all. God's spiritual nature, infinity, eternity, power, and holiness are briefly comprehended in this one word 'love.' They are modes of love, and as such only do they touch our hearts: 'Though one should speak with the tongues of men and angels' of the attributes of God, and should omit love, he is become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Eternity only bewilders me, unless I think of it in connection with a *love* that never grows old. Infinity is unthinkable and barren of all comfort, unless it means that I can never exhaust, measure, or see over the edge of his love. Almightiness and all-knowledge overwhelm me with awe, till I remember that the first is the great, tender, unweary arm, and the second the all-seeing, unslumbering eye of love. Like Isaiah I am filled with terror at the vision of God's holiness, until I see that it is the purity of love which seeks to cleanse, not to kill, men of unclean lips and hearts; and I tremble when I see God's justice with its flaming sword, which turneth every way; and I should die with fear at its feet did I not know that justice is the odor of love, and anger itself is love in another form, enforcing, for love's sake, its own loving law. God, in all that he is, in the whole radiant and thrice-glorious round of His attributes, is love. . . Christ did not *create*, He revealed, the love of God. You do not say that the dawn makes the sun? Nor that the incoming ships cause the flow of the tide?

Nor that the flowers create a summer? No! The dawn is the sign that the sun is coming; it is caused by the sun. The ships are carried in by the tide, and only reveal its current. The summer makes the flowers, and they declare its glory. Why, then, do you say that Christ *made*, or *bought*, or in any way *procured* the love of God, when it was God's love that sent him forth on his mission?—when God's love was before Bethlehem, else there had been no Christmas—before Calvary, else there had been no Good Friday? Was it not the love of God that gave Christ, that kept Christ in life, that received Him in death, and raised Him gloriously from death to Kingship at God's right hand? How, then, say you that Christ procured the love that gave Christ to us? 'Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told from the beginning?' that the love of God, though manifested transcendantly in *one act*, at *one time*, is the most *eternal thing* in God—that it always has been, and always will be, what it is now? That it is no stream, beginning as a shallow brook, in Genesis ankle deep, but growing deeper as it flows, knee deep in the Psalms, to the waist in the Prophets, unfathomable on the Cross? No! The love of God has no shallows. It is *equally deep everywhere—Calvary deep* wherever you try it. As far as God's love is concerned, the Cross might be placed in Genesis as well as in John—in Leviticus as well as in Luke.

'God is love.' When? *Always.* 'God is love.' Where? *Everywhere.*

Love built heaven. Love made earth. Love made hell; and its pains are the measures of God's love for goodness—its flames are love on fire. 'He overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea: *for his mercy endureth forever;*' and by the kiss or the rod; by caress or correction; by 'gentle gales from the wings of angels that fan His Mercy Seat,' or by

hot blasts from the burning marl of hell; by the blood of Christ, and pleading love, or by fire and brimstone of punative love, God will overthrow all evil in all men and beings, and will not rest until the Holy Spirit shall say of the New Creation, 'It is finished': For '*God is love.*'"—*Gospel of Fatherhood, pp. 6–9.*

When, in connection with these various extracts gathered from many types of writers, we remember that the Northern Presbyterian Church, when recently revising its *Confession of Faith*, inserted the statement that "in the Gospel God declares his love for the world and his desire that all men should be saved;" and in the accompanying *Declaratory Statement* published that "the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of his love to all mankind, his gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," we can see how potent the New Theology has come to be, with the universal love of God as its central and genetic principle for organizing the whole content of divine revelation.

God is love. This, with Pelagians and Pelagianizers, is the primary and fundamental conception of the divine character—the *fons et origo* of all the divine life—the dynamic centre of the nature of God, the chief end of his being and of all his activities. He would not be at all if he did not love; he would not be blessed but miserable if he did not love; he lives to love; and more, he lives by loving. All his attributes are held to be unified by love; all his acts are held to be but revelations of his love. In frantic language this school tells us that love "built hell," and that all the fires of the divine wrath are really but the burnings of Jehovah's love. God is said to be Infinite Love: this is the Pelagian reduction of the character of the Deity, and the genetic source of all his conceptions of theology and life.

This new conception of the divine character, we are told, and we can readily believe it, has done much to discredit the old traditional doctrines about God, which have, in times gone by, oppressed the minds of men. The vistas of radical conclusions which this view of God as Infinite Love and Absolute Goodness has opened are, we are assured, so vast and bewildering that religious thinkers have everywhere been compelled to reinterpret old faiths, and recast old doctrines, and cast away many old dogmas of orthodoxy. Already, it is triumphantly claimed, has the new wine burst the old wine-skins. No intelligent person, since the dawning of the new theology, who for an instant meditates upon the new idea, allows to the new conception its full and logical influence, and fearlessly drives home its legitimate inferences, and appreciates truly and clearly the meaning of the statement that God is moral love, can ever again give his hand to the theology of his fathers.

And what are some of these radical and reconstructive conclusions that are accepted with cocksureness and boasted of with such overweening confidence?

(1) It must now be seen from the new theology that God has a profound moral concern in the welfare of the race. His happiness now appears bound up in theirs. Impelled by a love which was immanent in his own bosom to create the race in the first instance, now that they are created, he cannot cast off the race either in whole or in part, but must stand by the work of his own hands to save his happiness. The theory of the ultimate salvation of only a remnant of the human family is utterly incompatible with the idea of a loving God. Isaiah and other biblical writers, we are told, are not to be blamed for not teaching absolute universalism, for it was the best "that even transcendent spiritual genius could do, even under special inspiration," with the old

traditional conception of Jehovah as a God of righteousness and justice. The new doctrine of God had not been evolved, and consequently the world was taught by the biblical writers that the final universe would show a part of the human family saved and a part lost. Such a result, we are told, cannot be made to quadrate with the idea of a God of love. "No believer in the salvation of a remnant only can show the slightest ground in moral reason for belief in any thing that is worth believing." Universalism is the first inference from the new doctrine of God.

(2) A second inference from the definition of God as love carries away the traditional doctrine of election as held by Augustine, Calvin, and the Reformers. Election and faith in a moral Deity—we are assured—are conceptions mutually and eternally exclusive. "Where criticism of the contents of the Bible was forbidden, where the determination of all Biblical truth, by the absolute moralism of Christ was not insisted upon, where it was incumbent upon the believer to construct his creed from the whole body of the Scriptures, any other conclusion than that at which he arrived (election) was out of the question. The patristic Augustine, the reformer Calvin, and the puritan Edwards were each like a Samson shorn of his locks in trying to defy the Phillistines." These men imposed upon themselves the restriction that one text of Scripture was as much inspired, and as authoritative, as another; consequently they could reach no other conclusion than that there were elect and non-elect infants, as well as elect and non-elect adults. But such a conclusion, we are told, is absolutely irreconciable with the love of God indiscriminately and universally extended to the entire race.

(3) A third inference sweeps away the idea that God must be propitiated, placated, appeased, by the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty. The new conception of God—we are told—dooms "the theology

of the shambles," "the theology of blood." Christ came not to *procure* but to *reveal* the love of God for all men. The atonement was but a moral influence—a display of the great love which surged in the divine bosom—the infinite craving of the divine heart for the love and good will of sinful men, that men might thereby be melted and constrained to make terms with the Deity. The tragedy of Calvary, as interpreted by the old theology as an immolation of the Son of God in order to satisfy divine justice, and thereby render it possible for God to love and bless, justify and sanctify, the sinner, is, we are told, absolutely incompatible with the conception of God as a God of love. He already, and *ex necessitate*, loved human beings, and yearned for their salvation; he had created them because his infinite love craved human objects upon which to satisfy itself; there was therefore absolutely no need, and no reason, for Jesus to die to placate the Almighty. Infants therefore do not stand in need of any atonement, nor any operations of grace.

(4) A fourth inference from the new conception of the divine character extends the opportunities of salvation beyond this life. The theory thus denies that character for eternity is fixed in time. "It must now be said that the doctrine that confines the moral opportunity of man to this life undermines faith in the moral character of God. To say that the Creator has a supreme moral interest in human beings, that he is full of compassion for them and offers to help them in the way of righteousness during the brief and uncertain period of their existence upon earth, but that after death his mood is one of unalterable mercilessness toward all the failures in time, and that the environment of the future is so constructed as to make the desire for ethical improvement—supposing it to exist, which is not at all unlikely—eternally ineffectual, is to destroy forever the moral idea of

God." The old theology, we are told, was full of shuffle and sophism here. It contended for the eternal willingness of God to save to the uttermost; it proclaimed an infinite atonement by Christ; it homiletically declared his love for the world and the universality of his desire for the salvation of all men; and yet he saw countless millions of heathen die, and unnumbered babies go down into the grave, and yet told us that behind the gates of death there was no chance and no change! As long as God is love—the theory assures us—the door of hope cannot be closed in the face of a single human being who owes life and existence to the Almighty. It must swing open throughout all eternity; and if, perchance, it should get closed against one finally impenitent and incorrigible sinner, love, being able to do nothing else, would demand his eternal annihilation.

The old theodicies, whether of the remnant, or of election, or of atonement, or of the restricted opportunity to this earthly life—it is charged—rend assunder the ethical idea of God, and cannot be made to homologate with the new conception of the character of God as centralized in love. If these premises and reasonings be admitted, then the ultimate salvation of the dead infant finds its basing in the divine sensibility, which must, in the end, come to be *satisfied love*. The causes of its salvation are, therefore, in the yearnings of the divine heart for the creatures of his hands.

I. God is not infinite love. If he were, he would be nothing else. He is infinite, and his essence and all his attributes are infinite as essence and as attributes; love is one of his perfections, and God possesses infinite love as one of the perfections of his nature; but it is fallacious to identify him with love so as to make true to fact the predication, *God is Infinite Love*. Man possesses finite love, but it certainly would be foolish to define him as *Finite Love*.

All the divine attributes are in God's character in a perfect harmony, so there is and there can be no antagonisms in his nature. There is wisdom and power and justice and love, and they are all unified by *holiness*. God's knowledge is a holy knowledge; his power is holy power; his love is a holy love; and his wrath is a holy wrath; and his justice is holy justice; holiness is a consummate and all-inclusive perfection, the cement of all his multiform and manifold traits of character. His essence always energises in a holy manner; and therefore he cannot love what he hates, hate what he loves, else would there be a schism in his very nature, and all his life would be subject to his will. He is a necessary and immanent being—eternally what he is, and as he is. But his very holiness causes him to energise towards the holy in a loving mode, and towards the sinful in a wrathful mode.

If man was created in the image of God, it is legitimate and logical to reason from the likeness up to the original. Man certainly possesses intellect; sensibility, conscience, and will, for we are directly conscious of these powers; and conscience, intellect and will cannot be reduced to forms of sensibility: we are immediately conscious of distinction and difference. To know is not to feel; to perceive moral distinctions or to pronounce moral judgments is not a mere form of feeling; to will and emit volition is not to express mere emotion. I have the power to know, to feel, to will, to judge; and these several functions are distinct from each other. I am not all heart, and I am not exclusively heart. But it would be just as rational aud consonant to unify the whole life of man, the image, in some ground form of sensibility, as to reduce the entire life and character of God, the original, to some primary and genetic form of sensibility, namely, *love*.

If the Pelagianizer's reduction of the life of the

Deity were correct, then love would have to be construed as the essence, and the intellect, conscience and the will of God would have to be treated as the logical genus; for it is an indisputable law of all classification, that the whole essence descends into each of the species, and that the whole of every species comes under the genus. Then the divine knowledge would be but a form of the divine love; and the divine conscience would be but an aspect of the divine heart; and the divine will would be but a variety of the divine affection; and so all classification of the divine activities would be involved in inextricable confusion. This would be not only to hopelessly confuse thought and muddy clarity, but it would overslaugh distinctions which exist in truth and reality. Intellect, sensibility, conscience, and will—knowing, feeling, judging, willing—can by no possible jugglery with words, by no cheating alchemy of sophistry, be reduced to the same forms of spiritual life.

God has conscience—an infinite moral sense. He can and does perceive the distinction between right and wrong, for, indeed, these very distinctions are founded in his uncreated nature. He can pronounce moral judgments, and refer the moral qualities which he perceives to the class right, or to the class wrong. with inerrant precision. He can, and does, fortify these moral judgments with the categorical imperatives—thou shalt, and thou shalt not. He can, and does, bind these moral judgments with the awful sanctions of life and death. To reduce them all to love is but to obliterate conscience from his constitution, and leave him a God of easy-going good nature —too colorless for self-respect, too namby-pamby to protect his honor when assailed, too weak to defend his administration, too nerveless to smite even the incorrigible subject who would dethrone him to the utter ruin of the universe, and who would degrade

him by filching from him his good name and all that name signifies both to him and to his intelligent moral universe. The human being without conscience—without moral sense—would be an infant, an idiot, an incapable. Can God truly be thus exhibited as an Infinite Infant, possessing only the power to coo; but destitute of that masculine power which is able to perceive, appreciate and resent, with righteous wrath, whatever is wrong and truly offensive? Yet such a character he would be, if he were nothing but love.

God *possesses* infinite knowledge, infinite sensibility, infinite righteousness, and infinite power. These are personal perfections of his infinite essence; but it were the sheerest nonsense to reduce knowledge, righteousness and power to a ground form of sensibility. To do so, were to obliterate the most obvious distinctions. If he were all love, where were his intelligence? If he were only sensibility, where were his conscience? If he were only mercy, where were his power? God's character is distinctly intelligent, distinctly affectionate, distinctly moral, distinctly voluntary, in all its energisings and manifestations.

Not only so: but not even the divine sensibility is reducible to love. There are two fundamental forms of the divine sensibility—love (*orge*) and wrath (*agape*). They are not accidental, but necessary aspects of all sensibility, whether human or divine. A heart incapable of nothing but love, would be incapable of doing aught else but loving, however unlovely and repulsive the object. A heart, on the other hand, incapable of aught else but wrath, would be incapable of doing aught else but hating, regardless of the lovely and attractive qualities of the object.

Love and wrath—*orge* and *agape*—are the opposite sides of the same sensibility, the north and south

poles of the same magnetism, the two hemispheres of the same sphere. They necessarily imply each other. If God loves any thing, he must hate its opposite; if he hates any thing, he must love its opposite. He cannot be affected alike by light and darkness, by good and evil, by sin and holiness, by Christ and the Devil, by heaven and hell. These are all moral opposites, and the divine feeling towards them must be opposite. This is but saying that God always sees correctly and feels truly. That which is good and lovely, he loves from the very nature of his own being; that which is evil and ugly, he in the same way and for the same reason hates; else were his feelings untrue to fact.

Does God have the same feelings for the Devil which he has for his Son? It were blasphemy to assert it. But if God has a heart and there is nothing in his heart but love, then every thing which has being would be an object of that love, for that is the only kind of feeling to which any thing could be related. Such a character would be not only weak and worthless, but incapable of appreciating moral distinctions.

Love is an appetency, and craves its object; and misery is but the deprivation of love of its object. If God is infinite love, then every thing which has existence is an object of that love; and, consequently, if any man be lost, he being an object of the divine love, it would break God's heart and inflict upon him an infinite misery. All beings would have to be saved in order to save the happiness of the Deity. What is more painful, more distressing, more corroding, than unrequited love?

The Scriptures do represent God as loving, but they do not represent him as loving every sort of quality and every kind of being. There are some things which he hates, and some whom he will not tolerate in his sight. They do represent him as

loving, but they do not represent him as doing nothing else. They represent him as knowing, as judging, as creating, as preserving, and governing. Indeed "wrath" and "justice" and their cognates, in connection with God, occur in the Bible far oftener than do "love" and its associates. That exegesis which finds nothing but a God of love in the Scriptures is at once partial and prejudiced.

If we turn to the providence of God as a revelation of his character, we behold disclosures of both his severity and his goodness. There is the thorn as well as the rose; there is the tragedy by the side of the benediction; there is the pestilence which wastes as well as the sunshine which prospers. Life is but a blend of misery and happiness; and there be many who pronounce the adversities more numerous than the blessings, the threnes louder than the songs. The problem which has taxed the intellect of the ages has been to invent a theodicy, a vindication of the ways of God in the world of men.

The gospel is a voice perpetually reminding sinful men that they are exposed to the wrath of God, and that the fires of divine justice and vengeance are kindled against them. It is the only explanation of the cross, and the tragic death of the only sinless being this world has known since the days of Eden. "Wrath" and its cognates occur in Scripture oftener than "love" and its associated ideas.

This article of the Pelagian creed—God is infinite love—is thus seen to be fallacious when tested by *philosophy*, *ethics*, the *Bible*, *providence*, and the *Gospel*. His very idea of God being incorrect, as a part of the proof for his doctrine that infants are salvable because the divine character is vacant of justice and wrath, his argument falls to the ground.

Does God love all infants indiscriminately? Let the Scriptures bear all the odium of their answer: "For the children being not yet born, neither having

done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her (Rebecca), The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is their unrighteousness with God? God forbid" (Rom. ix. 11–11).

The effort, therefore, to ground the doctrine of infant salvation in that interpretation of the divine heart which renders it metaphysically impossible for the Deity to punish anything, is futile, because it overthrows God in order to get the desired conclusion.

II. I charge the new theology with shifting the centre of gravity in the Scriptures.

According to these inspired and trustworthy documents, holiness, and not love, is the centre around which all the perfections of God revolve, the focus of the divine life, the dynamic point from which radiate all forms of God's activity, whether cognitive, sensible, moral, or voluntary. The Scriptures know nothing of a love which can be defined apart from the divine holiness. Not a loving God, but a holy God, is the being upon which this book concentrates emphasis, and makes exposition; and the final universe is to be a complete finite expression, not of his love, but of his holiness. The punishment of the sinful, the election of some and the reprobation of others, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the cessation of religious opportunity in this life, are all consistent with the holiness of God.

Our Calvinism delights to accenuate the divine sovereignty, as the controlling predicate of God's moral administration of the universe. He is not however absolute Lord by a sheer almightiness that lifts him to topless supremacy by its irresistible strength; nor by an infinite wisdom that enthrones him by its matchless statecraft; not, by an inexorable

justice that crowns him by the right of absolute fairness; nor by an exquisite loveableness which renders him the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely; but he sits upon the flaming circle of the heavens, and before his throne all others fall down, and at his feet all crowns are cast, because he is the *Holy God*. Below his knowledge, beneath his heart, under his conscience, behind his will, is his holiness, which determines and qualifies every revelation of his intelligence, every expression of his sensibility, every judgment of his conscience, every decision of his will. He is thus the ideal, the norm, the standard, of all goodness, uncreated, self-existent, immutable, perfect. The preeminence of his throne is bottomed upon the absoluteness of his virtue: his character makes him the Sovereign of all worlds and the Lord of all life.

What, then, is holiness? The root meaning of the word (*kadhosh* in Hebrew and *hagios* in Greek) is *separateness*. It denotes that quality in the object to which it is applied that gives it uniqueness, distinctiveness, apartness. In morals it denotes that which is ethically pure, and separate from whatsoever is wrong. In religion it connotes that which is sacred, and separate from whatsoever is secular, and devoted exclusively to God. In theology it signifies that which is sinless, and separated from whatsoever is morally tainted, and is affirmative of whatsoever is ethically and spiritually good. In the Scriptures there are holy *places* (tabernacle, temple, Jerusalem), the places which have been set apart for religious purposes; holy *times* (the Sabbath), the days and seasons consecrated to religious exercises; holy *persons* (Israel, priests, prophets, kings, ministers, Christians), persons who have been appropriated by the Deity; holy *culture* (the ritual, the church, the sacraments, prayer, praise, preaching, etc.), exercises set apart for the promotion of religious life. When

applied to God, as is done ungrudgingly in both Testaments, the word must still connote something of its original meaning, which, by way of eminence and negation, is expanded to signify Infinite Saintliness. "Holy, holy, holy" is the seraph's cry night and day—and therefore he is the "Lord God Almighty." Catholic to every attribute, the generic quality of every perfection, the foundation of every prerogative, the unitary feature of every expression of the divine life, holiness is the absolute clearness and purity of the nature of God. Its biblical symbols are *fire* and *light*.

Thornwell—a Southern theologian, approximating, if not the full peer of Calvin in religion and Hamilton in philosophy—gives the following profound and eloquent analysis of the holiness of God:

"Our next step must be to investigate the nature of holiness. It is evidently distinguished from right as a faculty is distinguished from its object. It is properly expressive only of a subjective condition. But is it a single attribute in God co-ordinate with those of truth, justice, goodness; or a single habit in man co-ordinate with other single habits of specific virtues? If so, there is no absolute unity in rectitude; there would be different forms of right, answering to the different moral perfections of God, and each as distinct from the others as intelligence in God is distinct from will. There would be no unity among human virtues but their common relation to the laws of conscience. But holiness is not thus to be restricted. It is not co-ordinate with the other moral perfections of God, but inclusive of them. It is that in which they are contained, from which they spring, and by which they are determined. They are all so many expressions of it. 'It comprehends,' as Howe justly remarks, 'his righteousness and veracity, and, indeed, whatever we can conceive in him under the notion of moral excellency. It may, therefore, be styled a transcendental attribute, that, as it were, runs through the rest and casts a glory upon every one; it is an attribute of attributes. Those are fit predications, holy power, holy truth, holy love,

etc. And so it is the very lustre and glory of his other perfections; he is glorious in holiness. Hence in matters of great moment he is brought in swearing by his holiness, which he is not wont to do by any one single attribute, as though it were a fuller expression of himself, an *adæquatior conceptus*, than any of the rest.' The reason of such representations is that holiness implies the fulness and energy of God's delight in righteousness. It is the very life of that love and blessedness which flows from his own self-sufficiency. God is love. His being is love, and the expressions of that love are the different streams of right, which originally in him, flow out upon rational creatures in the form of law and righteousness. In other words, God, as a holy being, contemplates himself as his own infinite good; and the blessedness of the divine nature is but the delight of the divine holiness in his being what he is. Without this infinite delight in himself as the good, moral distinctions could not possibly emerge. Without the presence of love, the good could not be thought of—it would be an unmeaning term. It is the fulness of love in his own perfections which determines him to express them, and to stamp them in some degree as the work of his hands. Hence, his holiness pervades his whole being; underlies every divine activity; prompts every divine energy. It actuates every perfection. God could not move without it;—he would cease to be God. As thus taken up, or rather contained, in the infinite love of God, infinite righteousness becomes something more than the right—it becomes the good—and is the right precisely because it is the good. This is the highest point that we can reach. This is the highest unity which we can find in rectitude. It is the centre of the divine love, the spring of the divine life, and the perfection of the divine blessedness. Remove this love in God, and you destroy the unity of his whole nature.''- *Writings, Vol. I., pp. 367, 368.*

We know what we mean by the *nature* of the lion, the *nature* of the lamb—that which determines their manner of life—the soil into which all instincts and organs strike their roots, and from which they draw up into conduct all that is peculiar and distinc-

tive. In man it is that invisible thread which runs through all his life, and unifies all experience, and gives coherence to character. Holiness is to God what, metaphysically speaking, fierceness is to the lion, what gentleness is to the lamb—the subsoil into which his intellective, emotional, moral, and volitional powers strike their roots and from which they draw up every self-expression and every self-testimony which he makes of himself. "It is the fullness of love to his own perfections which determines him to express them, and to stamp them in some degree upon every work of his hands." The love of himself, as the eternal and uncreated realization of what is best and not at all intermixed—the absolutely pure and holy—is the supreme motive for all divine revelations and deeds. The chief end of God is the glorification and enjoyment of himself; and the happiness of the creature can become a proximate object of interest to him only as it coincides with his own ultimate end. Since holiness is the regnant disposition of his own heart, only holiness in the creature can attract him or engage his affections. "Without holiness it is impossible to please God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Nothing else can be congenial to him, towards all else he must be displacent, on the principle that his own nature will energise truly. In so far, therefore, as there are any necessities *ab intra* that God should express himself *ad extra*, these necessities rise out of his subjective holiness, and not out of love for the creature.

There must be some principle of unity in the divine life, else there would be antagonisms of desire in his own bosom, disagreements among his own attributes, quarrels among his own impulses, incoherence of character, and confusion and contradiction in his own conduct. This is precisely the error of the new theology—*it shifts the centre of the divine life from holiness to love*,—and so lays upon its

shoulders the task of reconciling sin and misery, death and hell, and all things else, with the divine love. Could it but grasp the idea, the idea of the old traditional theology, that holiness, the divine sense of cleanness and purity, is the dynamic centre of the divine life, the harmonizing of sin and misery, death and hell, the salvation of a remnant, election and reprobation, atonement and sacrifice, and the restriction of the opportunities of grace to this life—the harmonizing of all such matters with the *holiness* of God would make a theodicy possible. With holiness as the very fundament of the divine character, it would be clear that infants, being shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin, must be, by their nature, repugnant to God at the very centre of his being, and so stand in awful need of the atonement of Christ, and the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. The infant being depraved, leaving entirely out of sight the question of how it became depraved, the problem is not, how can love bless the child; but the deeper one, how can holiness tolerate the child? It is not the divine love which must primarily and fundamentally be satisfied but the divine holiness which must be appeased and honored.

III. I also charge that the new theology shifts the centre of the gospel.

The centre of the Christian Scriptures is the gospel, and the centre of the gospel is the atonement, and the centre of the atonement is the *death of Christ*. From every point in the circumference there is a line which runs direct to the centre of the circle; so, from every point in the circumference of Christianity, there is a line which runs direct to the cross on which Jesus was crucified. A few general references to the Scriptures will make this point clear and strong.

(1) Everywhere in the Old Testament, which was but propædeutic to the New, looms the symbolism of

the priest, the altar, the victim, the ritual, the sacrifice; and it is a sheer impossibility to interpret these ancient documents without getting a sacrificial scheme of religion, albeit many, after it is gotten, resort to sundry sophisms and juggleries to explain away its typical and sacrificial features. The superlative problem for the ancient Jew was to go, in a symbolic way, from the outer court of the tabernacle to the *shekinah* of God's presence in the holy of holies, and then return with the divine absolution and benediction. To make this journey, he cannot go himself, but must go vicariously, through another, the high priest; but the high priest himself could not make the venture except with blood in the basin caught according to formula; and this he presented as the evidence of the fulfilment of priestly duty and the discharge of priestly obligation, and, sprinkling it according to the ritual before the mercy-seat and upon the ark of the covenant, returned to the outer court with the blessing and forgiveness of God. The dynamic point in the whole ritual was the atoning blood of the typical animal. The whole ritual made the place and the implements of Jehovah's worship crimson with sacrificial blood, and taught all Israel, with an emphasis of more than a threefold thickness, that "without shedding of blood was no remission." And all this was but the gospel in kindergarten, in its simplest and most naivete form; yet it sets the "blood theology" in bold contrast to the "love theology" of the sentimentalists.

(2) When we turn to the synoptic gospels, in which the Old Testament symbols begin to be translated into prosaic dogmas, we find our Lord interpreting his mission to the world as signifying, not primarily the revelation to the world of the divine love, but the expiation of sin, and the propitiation of God by his atoning death. He was born that he might die; he was baptized into his own death; his

whole significant ministry was cramped into three brief years because his death, with the necessary preliminaries, was the chief end of his advent and all his earthly ministrations. When the mother of Zebedee's children came to him seeking for her sons James and John the chief places in his kingdom, he took occasion to say to his disciples, "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45). This text is the key which unlocks our Lord's absorption in the thought of his death at the moment of this incident. He does not say that he could endure to die because his death would lead many to repentance, but that the object of his mission was to give his life a ransom for many. This is his own interpretation of the theology of himself. He does not throw the emphasis upon the effect which is to be produced upon the characters of men, but he accentuates the ransom (*lutron*), the deliverance, the rescue, of many from the hands of an incensed Deity, whose purpose is to execute the judgment of justice and law upon the wicked and disobedient race. Except in harmony with this doctrine of atonement, one despairs of giving anything approximating any intelligent and consistent exposition of the Lord's Supper, so solemnly pointing to his body which was "broken for you," and to his blood which was "shed for many for the remission of sins." The aim was not to set forth the divine love, but the atonement as the means of salvation appointed by God for the satisfaction of divine justice.

(3) If we turn to the Acts of the Apostles, we find that the earliest Christian preaching called into prominence, and centered attention upon, the death of Christ as the saving feature of the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, in his inaugural discourse, Peter cried out, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know

assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). Other potentates and saviors of men have waded to their positions through seas of other men's blood, starred their crowns with other men's tears, coined their huzzas out of other men's sighs, and set up their thrones upon pyramids of other men's bones; but the early ministers of Christ went before the world with a gospel which founded the lordship and the messiahship of Jesus upon his cross. It was not a gospel which sentimentalized about the divine love, but one which brought the hearer to the foot of Calvary as the mountain of all hope, privilege and expectation.

(4) If we turn to the Johannine literature, it too abounds in proof-texts which show that Christian life is abundingly indebted to the death of Christ for its beginning, sustentation and final perfection. John proclaimed a revelation which was made by redemption, and not a redemption made by revelation. Let us select one illustrative passage from his gospel, one from his Epistles, and one from his Revelation with which to exhibit his prevailing conception of the most important thing in the Christian religion. (a) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jno. xv. 13). (b) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sins" (I Jno. iv. 10). Thus the very love of God comes by the atonement, and if the propitiatory death of Jesus is eliminated from the love of God, it might be extreme to say that the love of God would thereby be vacated of all meaning, but it would certainly be vacated of all its apostolical and evangelical contents. (c) "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and

ever" (Rev. i. 5,6). The theme of all Christian praise, the doxology of the sacramental host which circles the throne of the Lamb day and night, is the blood which loosed them from sin, and conferred upon them the dignity of royalty and priesthood.

(5) If we look at the teachings of Paul, so dogmatic and theologically constructive, we are overwhelmed with an array of passages which make the death of Christ the centre of his religious system as the sun is the centre of our solar system. One great text will serve as a sample: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). With Paul the cross creates every thing Christian, explains every thing Christian, and is the focus at which everything Christian is converged, the central joy and crowning glory of every thing pertaining to the Christian religion, which is the only religion for sinners.

The death of Christ, we may then conclude, is the central thing in the Christian Scriptures, and the Christian religion cannot understand itself except by an exposition of the cross as the central theme of the gospel. The simplest truth, as well as the profoundest, both for evangelical propagation and theological systematization, is the words, *He bore our sins*. If our preaching does not so inspire our theology, and if our theology does not thus control our preaching, it is because there is no apostolic gospel in either, for where there is no atonement in Jesus' blood there is no efficacious gospel for sinners. All that theologizing, all that evangelizing, all that vitalizing, which finds some mode of minimizing the atonement of Christ, which maintains some attitude of reserve or self-repression towards this cardinal fact, is fundamentally defective and steers away from the heart of redemption. This truth is wrapped up with every doctrine of the Christian

faith and with every experience of the Christian life as the red thread is intertwined in every bit of cordage of the royal British navy.

But one of my students voiced a popular sentiment when he asked, "If this be true, why is the Christian mind of today so generally enamored of the idea that the love of God is the vital centre of the Christian religion?" I reply: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. i. 23). To those, like the Jews, whose minds are bound by ritualistic ideas, and whose religious conceptions are fenced by rites and ceremonies, which address their appeal to the love of the beautiful and ornate things of life, redemption by the naked fact of a bloody and repulsive cross shocks their sensibilities, and causes their spirits to revolt at what they call "the theology of the shambles;" the scheme is simply too *bloody* for their æsthetic sensitiveness. To those who, like the Greeks, apply to Christian life the dialectics of the Porch, Lycæum or Academy, salvation by faith in the death of a Jew is the sheerest foolishness: given the gospel of the love of God and we have a rational system which has but to elaborate the proposition—*love begets love*—in order to explain the genesis of all the graces of godliness. That *death* should be the cause of *life* strikes the reason that has become embued with the dictum—*like begets like*—as the very bathos of nonsense. And it is undeniably true that the modern Christian mind has, for the last forty or fifty years, become saturated with the categories of science, especially those of naturalistic evolution; and redemption by the *cross* is so contradictory to the canons and dictums of evolution, that a multitude of religious writers have been constrained to change the centre of the circle, putting the *love of God* in the place once occupied by the *atonement of Christ*. Evolution cannot work with a dead Christ.

There is another reason for the modern unpopularity of the atonement. Christian experience is always dissatisfied with itself—the deeper the experience the deeper the discontent. Every child of God aches to be better; and any scheme of religion adroitly presented, which promises to gratify this perennial and insatiable yearning for Christian perfection, will find ready acceptance with the hungry heart, and lead to manifold and multiform experimentations. A world physically sick, and afflicted with countless maladies, for the sake of bodily comfort and health, falls an easy victim to all patent nostrums of the medicine quack, faith cures, divine healings, and Christian science humbuggeries. So badly is man's moral nature deranged, so sensitive does the converted conscience become, so utterly disappointing are all our best efforts to be what we ought to be, that any schedule of soteriology and piety which can be presented with skill and takingness becomes tempting. We have learned so much by experimenting, that we experiment in theology. When, therefore, a new theory is presented which proposes to organize theology from an entirely new starting point, the venturesomeness which is in us all, coacting with the steady hunger of the soul and with the love of novelty and freshness, quickly popularizes the new doctrine. But just so certain as action and reaction are equal, so certain is it that the people of God, sooner or later, by one route or another, will return from their theological wanderings to walk in the old paths. The horizon is not destitute of signs that the Church is growing aweary with theological sentimentalizings, and is getting ready for some strong voice to cry, "Back to the atonement!"

Another of my students said to me one day: "How can we be fresh and attractive in our preaching, if we decline to adopt the premises of the new

theology, and go on singing the old story of the cross and atonement." But if we do not begin with the atonement, and with that which presupposes it, or is presupposed by it, then it is not harsh to say that we have no gospel beginning at all, and consequently can have no gospel ending; and so there would be no reason for preaching at all. Strike out the atonement, and neither the Church nor the ministry would have any rational or moral right to exist. We have all heard, to weariness, the repetition of orthodox formulas; but it was not the *orthodoxy* of the formulas that killed interest and attention, but it was the *monotony* of the formulas that was fatal; the vital meaning of these great realities, having slipped from the grasp, nothing has been left to the dull, prosaic preacher but to recite a form of sound words in the ears of his congregation. I claim that the doctrine of the atonement, the centre of the gospel, cannot become effete and senile and insipid to a world of lost sinners, but must hold perpetual and awful sway over the minds and hearts of dying men.

What is needed is not a new gospel, nor a gospel without atonement, nor a gospel with a new soteriological centre; but a fresher and truer realization of the spiritual meaning of the old formularies, which would put an end to insipid platitudinizings, and clothe the sermon with new words, enforce it with fresh aguments, and pour into it a new vitality. "There is nothing so urgently and immediately wanted by sinful men, nothing which strikes so deep into the heart, which answers so completely to its need, and binds it so irrevocably, and with such a sense of obligation to God, as the atoning death of Jesus." Given a deeper sympathy and profounder insight into the needs of sinful life on the one hand, and into the meaning of the atonement and its implicates on the other, and the preacher has a theology which draws to the depths of his being, and taxes

him in the totality of his mind and heart to make a proper exhibit of it to a lost and dying world; but when the preacher is equal to a task such as this, his preaching has perennial and deathless interest to his hearers.

When, therefore, the Christian minister stands beside the coffin of a little child and sentimentalizes about the general love of God, but fails to relate the death of the little one to the atonement of Christ, however poetic and pathetic he may be in his observations, it is not too severe to say that he fails to give any consolation which is founded in the gospel, or to hold out any hope which has Christ for its basis. The Scriptures know nothing about a love of God for any member of this fallen human race, which love was not procured by the atonement and made available by the blood of the cross. The whole sinful race is an object of the divine wrath, except as members of this race have become related to the cross of Christ—the only instrument which can change the wrath of God into love.

This, then, is the threefold complaint which I make against the new theology: (1) It is guilty of shifting the centre of the divine character from holiness to love; (2) of shifting the centre of the Scriptures from the sovereignty of God to the love of God; and (3) to shifting the centre of the gospel from the death of Christ to the love of God. These consequences are too serious and radical to justify us in resting the salvation of the dead infant upon the sentimental love of the Deity for human creatures in the general.

CHAPTER VII.

The Children of God.

There is quite a class of religious writers and teachers and preachers who assume, with complacent cocksureness, as one of the indisputable doctrines of the Christian faith, the universal *Fatherhood* of God and its correlate, the universal *childhood* of man; and from this assumption they draw out the implicates and corollaries in such a dogmatic mood as would be permissible only upon the supposition that the premise was axiomatic, or universally admitted beyond the possibility of all denial.

"There are few thoughts or sentiments that have risen more rapidly into popular favor than that which is expressed or implied in the phrase,—'The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man'—implying that because God is a universal Father, therefore all men are his children. The phrase is of comparatively recent origin; you never encounter it in the old books on our library shelves. But in the present age you hear it in the pulpit and in the pew, on the rostrum and in the forum, in the hospital and in the prison, in short—everywhere it passes as current coin; and it has, seemingly, settled down in the public mind, as a verity of advanced thought. The sociologist employs it as the basal ground of the altruistic law—'love thy neighbor as thyself,'' a law enforcing the ministries of reciprocity, sympathy, charity, and loving kindness, in a 'common brother-

hood of man,' springing from the 'universal Fatherhood of God.' The latitudinarian or freethinker employs it as the premise or datum from which he draws, as he believes, some very natural conclusions.

(a) That all men, irrespective of personal character, are God's children.

(b) That as a Father, God is very indulgent and kind, and makes great allowance for the vices and sins of all men as his children.

(c) That God, as a merciful Father, will never eternally punish any sinner for what he has done in this life, because it would be cruel and unfatherly in him to do so.

(d) The doctrine of eternal punishment, therefore, is an insult to divine sympathy and love, and a reflection on the Fatherhood of God."—*Hartman: Divine Penology, p. 59.*

This theory generally, but not always, recognizes that God's *natural* Fatherhood of all human beings is distinguishable from his *gracious* Fatherhood of believers, and affirms and contends for the former, the natural Fatherhood, with an earnestness which makes it regulative in theology. Man, as man is held to be the native child of God, and all the redemptive actions of God are explained as taking their rise in, and being developed from, the divine paternity. In making the atonement by his Son and the application of the benefits of that atonement by his Spirit, God is actuated by those paternal motives which are normally and naturally responsive to the conception of men as his children. The whole gospel is construed as a scheme for reconciling a Father and his estranged sons. All the ideas of salvation, therefore, must be cast in the language and figures of the domestic fireside. The filial relation is made to supersede and be causative of the servile. God is the natural Father of all men; all men are the natural children of God. This view is not restricted to devotional and homiletical literature, but finds expression also in those graver treatises which aim to

construe the facts of the Christian faith with exactitude.

An English Congregational preacher, with rhetorical ornateness and fervor, puts this view in these words: "Now the Bible here, and elsewhere, answers this immense scientific question (the origin of the race) by the doctrine that God and man stand to each other in the relation of Father and child. Man, says the Bible, is ignorant, foolish, desperately wicked—yet a child; a son, though prodigal. This fact gives to human sin its crimson dye and to human sorrow its peculiar pathos."—*Gibbon: Fatherhood, p. 14.*

A Cumberland Presbyterian preacher, in a little volume of sermons, says: "The genetic principle, the principle which interprets and adjusts all the facts of the science (theology), is *the Fatherhood of God.* In this place Fatherhood takes the place of sovereignty in the Calvinistic system, the place of justification by faith in the Lutheran system, and the place of the divine immanence in the so-called New Theology."—*Black: God our Father, p. 8.*

A Methodist writer gives his view in the following extravagant and frantic language: "The God of the twentieth century must be larger than the God of the first century. He has greater responsibilities and a broader field. His duties are immeasurably more complicated and the details of his government more elaborate and confusing. Once he was the God of heaven and earth and hell, and his relation to these was as simple as their relation to each other. . . . The question of the divine sovereignty is not as important now as the question of the divine paternity. We are more interested in heaven than in hell; and more concerned about a redeemed and evenly balanced earth than either. We are looking for large things in God, for we have found humanity to be large and the predication of a Father God makes all men brothers. We have broken with the ancient

creeds that localized God."—*Wiley: Back to Bethlehem, pp. 127, 131.*

An Episcopal professor in the New College, London, writes down his views in these words: "God is the Father of all mankind, loving all, kind to all, and calling all to himself in the gospel. But his disobedient children do not enjoy the fatherly relationship except in their share of the general providence of God, and in the fact that it is open to them to have higher privileges."—*Adeney: Theology of the New Testament, p. 47.*

The professor of theology in Yale University makes a cautious and discriminating statement of his views on this question of the Fatherhood of God: "A question concerning which there is a wide practical difference among teachers of religion is the question whether God is the Father of all men, or only of those who are obedient to his will. The question is one in regard to which clear discrimination is necessary, since it is one which affects, in no small degree, the conception of the divine character. . . The conclusion to which such an exnmination will lead may be correctly stated, I think, in this paradoxical form: God *is* the Father of all men, but men *become* the sons of God. . . Men are *ideally*, that is, according to the true divine idea of humanity, sons of God; but by reason of sin they are not *actually* what they are ideally and in possibility. . . It does not, however, follow, from what has been said, that there is no true sense in which all men may be spoken of as sons of God. In the special ethical sense in which Jesus was wont to use the term, all men are not the children of God; they are such, however, in the sense that they are made in God's image, and that they are the objects of his care and love."—*Stevens: Doctrine and Life, pp. 75–77.*

A Methodist theologian of Plymouth, England, teaches this doctrine of the common Fatherhood of

God in this manner: 'A conspicuous element of the teaching of Christ and the entire New Testament is that God is our *Father*. . . This term involves an analogy; and makes every form of fatherly excellence among men to be a mirror reflecting, amid human imperfection, the infinite nature of God. It reveals in God a father's heart which, by virtue of his relation to us as the Source of our being, loves and yearns for his children on earth."—*Beet: New Life in Christ, p. 286.*

The professor of Systematic Theology in Drew Theological Seminary (Methodist), expresses his view in this way: "The one thing essential to us in this discussion, however, stands out very clearly in the New Testament. That one essential thing is this: *God loves men as a perfect father loves his children.* The last word of revelation is not that God is a moral sovereign, but that he is a sovereign Father. Mr. Lidgett's phrase is an exceedingly happy one—God is the 'Father Regnant.'"—*Curtis: Christian Faith, p. 259.*

The professor of Systematic Theology in Vanderbilt University (Methodist) dogmatizes after this fashion: "It is his universal Fatherhood that we here and now recognize as the highest and truest conception of Deity ever revealed to man. . . The Fatherhood of God is a doctrine which naturally carries along with it the sonship of man. If God is the Father of all men, then it follows that all men are children—his sons by nature and birth, by virtue of being created in his image."—*Tillett: Personal Salvation, p. 11, 229.*

The professor of Biblical Theology in the Rochester Theological Seminary (Baptist) writes: "The truth that man is the offspring of God, implies the correlative truth of a common divine Fatherhood. God is Father of all men, in that he originates and sustains them as personal beings like unto himself.

Even towards sinners God holds this natural relation as Father. It is his fatherly love, indeed, which provides the atonement. Thus the demands of holiness are met and the prodigal is restored to the privileges of sonship which have been forfeited by transgression. This natural Fatherhood, therefore, does not exclude, but prepares the way for, God's special Fatherhood towards those who have been regenerated by his Spirit and who have believed on his Son."—*Strong: Systematic Theology, p. 238.*

Upon this question of God's natural Fatherhood of all men, Dr. R. S. Candlish of the New College, Edinburgh, and Dr. T. J. Crawford of the University of Edinburgh, (both Presbyterians), held a great debate which was published in two volumes, which contained nearly all that can be said on the two sides of the question. Dr. Candlish denied, and Dr. Crawford affirmed, the common Fatherhood of God. Dr. Crawford says: "In regard to the more general aspects of this doctrine, the prevalent opinion of the Christian Church has never been, that all mankind may be held to be children of God—as deriving their existence from him—as created after his likeness—as still retaining some traces of his image, though grievously defaced and distorted by the Fall—and as largely partaking of his providential care and bounty. I am not aware, indeed, that this general Fatherhood of God has ever hitherto been formally controverted. Sometimes it has been unduly magnified, so as to supersede or cast into the shade those other relations of sovereign Ruler and righteous Lawgiver which are equally and no less essentially sustained by Him. But even those who have most loudly protested against such inordinate exaltation of it, the paternity of God, as one of the manifold relations which he bears to all his intelligent and moral creatures, has, so far as I know, been freely and fully admitted."

While Dr. Crawford sought to so hedge his doctrine as to effectually shield it from radical inferences, many who have adopted his doctrine have run rough shod over his guards and limitations, and used the Fatherhood of God as a principle with which to reconstruct many of the most fundamental doctrines of grace.

The chief end of God has been changed from his "glory" to the happiness of mankind; moral government has been converted into moral discipline; all sins have been transmuted into filial disobedience, to be dealt with upon that footing; all penalties have been transformed into chastisements; the atonement of Christ, instead of being a satisfaction of the justice of God as a magistrate and ruler, has been construed as a mere revelation of fatherly love; the gospel is but an appeal to wayward children to come back home, and conversion is but the return of prodigals to their Father's house; God's father-love, in the infinitude of its yearnings, must pursue his impenitent child beyond the confines of the grave into the disembodied state—must chase him forever until he is won, for the paternal heart must break if one of his sons or daughters, in all the long drawn eternity, should fail to come back at last. No right minded father could be happy, if he should permit one of his children to perish; if he were active in condemning one of them to hell he would be a monster. The theory is made to define God's relation to this world; the origin of man; the nature of sin; the quality of punishment; the nature and necessity of atonement; the nature of conversion and Christian life; and all questions in eschatology. Drawing up these reconstructions into formal propositions, we have the following contrasts between the old and the new theologies:

(a) God is not the Sovereign, but the Regnant Father, of this world.

(b) Man is not the creature and subject of God, but he is his divine progeny and child.

(c) God's administration over this world is not a Moral Government, but a Parental Discipline.

(d) Sin is not the violation of a law of the kingdom, but a transgression of the rule of the Father's house.

(e) No suffering under the divine administration can be strictly punitive, but all experiences are remedial and beneficial.

(f) The atonement was made necessary, not by the strict rigours of justice, but by the yearnings of fatherly love.

(g) The effect of the death of Christ was not to placate God, but to propitiate the sinner.

(h) Conversion is not the return of a proscribed, outlawed criminal, but the return of a prodigal child, coming back home.

(i) The Spirit's influence is not an almighty regeneration of an upset moral nature, but the sweet appeals of the gospel to the filial instincts of the straying child.

(j) God is not, on the whole, strict to mark iniquity, but is a kind and indulgent Father, overlooking many human foibles and besetting sins.

(k) At any rate, it is not man who must seek God, but God who must seek man.

(l) God cannot inflict eternal punishment upon the creatures of his hand; it would react in his own misery.

The effect of the whole reasoning is to predicate of God such a paternal and sympathetic interest in the entire human family as to make his happiness, and theirs, to be indissolubly bound up together, so that whatever he may do to the race, or permit to be done to any member of it, must unavoidably react upon his own peace of mind. Every creator is not necessarily dependent upon his creatures for happi-

ness, but every father is unavoidably dependent upon his child for peace and joy. If God be a Father and all men be his children, his happiness and theirs are intimately connected and reciprocally conjoined.

God, then, we are told, is, in strict literalness and exact truth, the Father of all human beings, (including infants, idiots and moral incapables); and all human beings, (including again infants, idiots and moral incapables), are in strict literalness and exact truth the children of God; as such he recognizes them, and cherishes for them all those affections which are natural in the paternal bosom, and constantly performs a father's offices towards every one of them; it would consequently be unfatherly in him to suffer one of these little ones to perish; and if in any way one of these little ones should finally be lost, the Heavenly Father, true to the paternal instinct, would ever stand at the gates of hell and mourn for his lost child. And were he, in the exercise of his judicial or sovereign prerogative, to actively consign one of these little ones to hell, at the same time holding within himself the power to save it, (for infants have no free will to oppose to him), he would be a virtual Moloch, causing his children to pass through the fire. It is therefore a moral impossibility—according to this type of theological opinion—for any infant dying in infancy to be other than saved because God is the Almighty, Regnant Father, always yearning for his child, absolutely able to save it, and is in no sense a cruel monster.

This argument for the salvation of the dead infant is a popular one; and it must be held to be an invincible one, provided its major premise is true and sound. A human father with a proper heart in his bosom may be found who, as a judge, might pronounce the death sentence upon his own child, or, as a sheriff, might execute the same, but he would carry

down with him into his grave a burden of grief and sorrow. And were God to do, out of a sense of righteousness, like the supposed human father, he too, like that father, would feel the bereavement all the days of his eternal life. As a Father he could not execute his infant, helpless and unfortunate children.

I admit the soundness of the logic: I do not believe any child of God, infant or adult, sound or unsound in its faculties, is now, or ever can be, a prisoner in hell, shut in forever by the judicial wrath of God. But believing in future and endless punishment, I deny outright the major premise of the reasoning: God is not the *natural* Father of any human being, nor is any human being the *natural* child of God; there is no other but a *gracious* Father. The effort, therefore, to account for the salvation of a dead infant by relating it to the general Fatherhood of God must be held to be a failure, because it bases the conclusion upon a foundation which is false to fact.

I. The filial relation can be constituted in but two modes: (1) by generation, (2) by adoption.

A relation is any sort of connection, perceived or imagined, between two or more things; any comparison which the mind may make. Although relations are not real entities, but merely mental modes of viewing things, yet the notion is not a vague and arbitrary one, but is determined by those true qualities which belong to the things related. We cannot, at will, see relations which have no foundation in the nature of the related objects. If we did, such relations would be fictitious and artificial.

In all relations there are, at least, two terms—the object on the right hand, and the object on the left hand—the *terminus a quo*, and the *terminus ad quem*. The left-hand member is called the *relative*, and the right-hand member is called the *correlative*,

as father and son, husband and wife. Here father is the relative and son is the correlative; or husband is the *terminus a quo*, and wife is the *terminus ad quem*.

God and man may be considered each in himself and without respect to the other, that is, absolutely; or they may be considered in comparison with each other, that is, relatively. If God and man be considered as the two terms of a relation; if God be considered as the relative and man as the correlative; what is the nature of the relation between the two?

The first and most obvious result of the comparison would be to apprehend God as the *creator* and man as the *creature;* and so the *creaturely* relation would be the primary and aboriginal relation which man sustains to God. No other preceded it, and all others are consequential upon it. In his relation to man, God was first his Maker; and in man's relation to God, he was first his creature. We cannot have the idea *creator*, without the correlative *creature*.

If we put these two terms into comparison again, we next perceive that God is *Lord*, and man is *subject*, and man's relation next to the creaturely is the *servile*. Here the relative is Lord, Master, Ruler; and the correlative is subject, servant, subordinate. The moment we think of a master we must by a law of mind think of servant.

Whatever God makes, he must instantly rule; or it will rule him; the Creator or the creature, at once and *ipso facto*, becomes the sovereign and administers government over the other. The Lordship of God springs immediately and necessarily out of the creatorship of God; and the subjectship of man arises immediately and necessarily out of his creaturehood. Because God is man's Maker, he is man's Ruler; and because man is God's creature, he is God's servant.

The second relation—the servile—grows out of the first—the creaturely: that is, man's creaturehood is the foundation of his subjectship to God; and God's creatorship of man is the foundation of his lordship over him.

But we may put these two terms—God and man—into comparison for the third time, and we shall discover yet another relation—the filial. In this comparison the relative is *father*, and the correlative is *child*—God is Father and man is his child. The instant we have the concept *father*, that instant we must have the concept *child*.

These are the three primary and original relations which man sustained to God: (1) the creaturely, (2) the servile, (3) the filial. Or reading the relation from the other term, God was (1) Creator, (2) Ruler, (3) Father.

Sentimentalizers reduce them all to unity—to the unity of paternity and filiation. The fatherhood of God expresses the whole content of God's relation to man; and the sonship of man is held to express the entire content of man's relation to God. The scheme logically, and sometimes avowedly, denies that God, in any true and proper sense, is the creator of man, or that man is the creature of God; denies that he is, in the strict rigorousness of proper language, the Sovereign of man, or that man is the subject and servant of God; but affirms that God, in time and proper reality, is only the father of man, and that man is, strictly speaking, only the son of God. All the creaturehood which is admitted is a *filial* creaturehood; and all the subjectship which is allowed is a *filial* subjectship. The fact is, man is nothing but the *son* of God, and all else which is predicated of him is but an implicate of this premise.

Principal Fairbairn grows extravagant and frantic; denies the primariness of the creaturely relation of man to God; and affirms that the filial was

precedent, original, and causative of the very creaturehood of man.

Paternity is thus represented as causative of man's creaturehood; and man becomes a creature of God by becoming a child of God. His very being is supposed to be originated by the divine paternity. "Fatherhood did not come through creation, but rather creation came because of Fatherhood." (Fairbairn.) That is, God was a Creator because he was a Father; he became a Creator by being a Father. Fatherhood is thus represented as the primordial and genetic conception of all other relations which God may hold to our race.

"I contend earnestly for the distinction of the two relations. Neither must be suffered to override the other; neither must be merged or sunk in the other. It is one thing for me to have God as my ruler, lawgiver, and judge; it is another and altogether different thing for me to have him as my Father. What the points of difference are, it would be premature, at this stage, to discuss. But I may briefly refer to two of them, as illustrating the importance of our keeping the relations in question quite apart, in all our conceptions and reasonings regarding them.

Rightly understood, as it seems to me, the paternal relation, in the first place, implies the enjoyment by those towards whom it is sustained of a permanent footing in the family, as opposed to one that is contingent and precarious (John viii. 35). And secondly, in consequence of its implying this, it excludes the idea of punishment properly so called; admiting only that of chastisement (Heb. xii. 5–11). It is not the function of the father, as such, to try, or put upon probation. It is not his function to inflict a penal or retributive doom. But these are functions of that rule or government by law and judgment which God the Creator exercises and must ever exercise. Surely there is here a line of distinction and demarcation that is sufficiently clear, and that ought to be kept clear. For observe what follows if it is obliterated or lost sight of. Let the view which some extreme

lovers of simplicity would advocate be adopted. Let God be simply a Father and his government simply fatherly. Let all his administrative acts be held to be done by him as the Father of his creatures. Then this dilemma immediately presents itself. Either, on the one hand, you must include among the actings of a father, in his paternal character, the imposing of an arbitrary or discretionary test, and the inflicting of penal judgment; in which case, you make fatherhood little more than a name, descriptive perhaps and suggestive of the general benevolence which may be supposed to temper the severity of strict rule, but not otherwise significant of any special affection or of any special mode of treatment. Or else, on the other hand, giving to fatherhood its full and true meaning, and maintaing it to be wholly and exclusively a relation of pure fatherly love, you deny, or to be consistent you should and must deny, that one who sustains that relation and governs according to it can either test in the exercise of sovereignty, or punish in the execution of judgment. Probation, and especially retribution, in the true and proper sense, become thus impossible. In this dilemma lies the mischief of the view which I oppose."—*Candlish: Fatherhood of God, pp. 23–24.*

The attempt is not infrequently made to show that man was made the son of God by creation, but Principal Fairbairn attempts to show that man became the creature of God by filiation. To represent the human product of God as a Father as at once a son and a creature would destroy the antithesis. The offspring of a father is a son; of a creator is a creature; and it is improper to represent man as a son by creation, or as a creature by filiation. It is impossible to rise from creaturehood to sonship, on the one hand; or to rise from sonship to creaturehood, on the other.

There are but two ways in which one person can become the son of another: (1) by generation; (2) by adoption.

In *generation* the nature of the begetter is communicated to the begotten. The law, "Like begets

like," rules this mode of constituting sonship: the child is the metaphysical duplicate of its parent: the ancestry cannot be one kind, and the progeny another kind. In Genesis God ordained the law that plants should produce after their "kind;" that animals should bring forth after their "kind;" that man should multiply and populate the earth with human beings after his "kind." The hypothsis of the transmutation of species" violates both the constitution of nature and the constitution of Scripture. Consequently, if man, in the beginning, became the child of God by *generation*, he would be a *little God* in the same sense in which the baby is a little man, because in generation the essence of the begetter is communicated to the begotten. But none can be found to teach that Adam was thus the born-child of God; and if they did, they would be compelled to teach, as a part of the hypothesis, that Adam had a *mother*. The antecedents of a generated child are both a father and a mother. Christ had a human mother and a divine Father, and is a divine-human being.

The only other mode in which Adam could have become the child of God was by *adoption*. But adoption presupposes the existence of the person adopted, and consequently the creaturehood of Adam must be thought of as preceding and conditioning his divine adoption.

Since, then, the divine Fatherhood of man did not come (1) through creation, (2) nor through generation, it must have come (3) by adoption.

But fatherhood by adoption is voluntary, and not from a necessity of nature. Among men it is set up by courts according to the forms of civil law; with God it was likewise judicial, and superinduced upon the being whom he had created, and in the very act of creation, related to himself as a servant. In short, God adopted the human servant he had created, and

bestowed upon him the rights aud privileges of a son and child in his house.

But this filial relation, these filial rights and privileges, this son's standing and heirship, were not conveyed to Adam, in the beginning, indefectibly and inalienably, but mutably and conditionally. He was made a probationer in Eden, not only as a created citizen in the kingdom, but also as an adopted child in the house of God. The penal consequence of failure to meet the divine requirements, as those consequences terminated upon his filial relation, was the cancellation of his adoption, the casting him off as a son.

The head of the race did fail in his moral trial, and his exact status today is that of a proscribed citizen in the kingdom of God, and an outcast and disinherited son of the house of God. Through the fall, he lost his adopted sonship of God, and is no longer the child of his Maker. Christ repeatedly taught sinful men that they were not the children of God, but that grace had provided for their becoming such; and it is by a gracious adoption that sinners—outcast sons—are restored to their lost filial standing. He looked the Jews in the face and said, "Ye are of your father the devil."

"Regeneration" is not a biblical word, and a sound theology does not define a "regenerated son" as a person to whom the divine Begetter has communicated his essence to the human begotten, for sinners are not deitized by being "regenerated." There is, in this act of grace, no change of the metaphysical substance of the soul; that abides identical and truly and properly human. But the change is in the ruling dispositions and affections and appetencies of the soul. There is, therefore, no literal re-birth of man by God, for there was never, in this strict sense, any first birth from the Deity. Regeneration is not a literal but a figurative word, and

connotes that radical change of moral appetency which is wrought by the almighty power of the Holy Ghost, the creation of a new moral disposition.

Man's original sonship, like his gracious sonship, was not generative but *adoptive* in its nature. A failure on the part of many theologians to perceive and recognize this distinction has created a problem which staggers faith and revolts the natural feelings of the heart, namely, How can God, as Father, damn one of his children? To escape a conclusion so abhorent many flout the doctrine of any future punishment whatsoever.

Whatever man does or becomes, God remains ideally perfect. Then how can he, as a Father, abandon his offspring? More and worse: How can an ideally perfect Father consign his own child to an endless hell? It is unnatural; it is unfatherly; it is revolting; it cannot be done.

Before this awful thing can be done, (and it is done), God must cease to be a Father and man must cease to be his child. The termination of this relation could never take place if he were the generated child of God, for, in case of sonship in this mode, it could only be terminated by the annihilation of the child, and even then a fatherly heart would be left in the bosom of God while the correlative child would have been reduced to zero, and the consequent aching of that bereaved heart would be indescribable. But if the human sonship of God were adoptive in its nature, it could end for good and sufficient cause, and leave no aching void in the bosom of the adopting Father.

In the order of thought, the human race was first the creature of God; and then the servant of God; and then the adopted child of God. On account of sin, God repealed the adopting act, and the race was disowned and disinherited, and no member of it is now the child of God except by another act of gracious

adoption on account of the work of the Second Adam. All men were in the beginning the *adopted sons of God;* but on account of sin the *adopting act* has been annuled, and no man is now by nature the child of God: all have been repudiated. The sonship of the race therefore is in the past tense; it was, it is not now, and if it ever comes to be again, it must be by grace. The creaturely relation, on the other hand, could not be annuled without annihilating the creature; the servile relation cannot be abolished without transforming the servant into something else; the filial relation which is the product of generation must be perpetual: once a son in this mode always a son, unless the person be annihilated; but sonship by adoption may be, and among men is frequently, abrogated. This was the nature of man's original relation to God, and on account of sin it has been abrogated, and man's status aside from grace is that of a discarded, disowned and disinherited child of God. That is, he is no longer by nature a son of God.

II. There are some Scripture passages which categorically deny that fallen and unredeemed men are the children of God.

Only a family register or some equivalent document can show that one person is the child of another person. The question of paternity and filiation are not answerable on *a priori* grounds: speculation is incompetent to the task: the evidence of witnesses, or of authentic and trustworthy documents, is alone competent to settle questions of pedigree and genealogy. Whether men are by nature the children of God is determinable therefore by revelation only.

Philip seems to have felt this to be the case, for when he heard Christ say, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also," he cried out, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (Jno. xiv. 7,8). To be assured that God was his

Father would have satisfied Philip; would have satisfied any disciple, and have pacified the emotions of any earnest heart. But, on the contrary, instead of replying in this vein, our Lord said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (Jno. xiv. 9). Our Lord thus made himself the mediator of the divine Fatherhood, and taught Philip, and all men, that it is only through Christ that any man can look upon God as his Father; and so to see God as a Father one must first see Christ as his Saviour.

The limitation of the divine Fatherhood is again strongly asserted in this passage: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jno. i. 12,13). Clearly they were not the children of God before they received Christ, and through believing on him obtained the authority to become the sons of God. Through no birthright of blood, in consequence of no attributes of their flesh, by no prerogatives of human will, but solely by the will of God expressed through the Redeemer did they come to stand in the filial relation to God. Moreover, as all men do not receive him, nor submit themselves to him, it is clear that all men are not the children of God, and we but juggle when we undertake to prove that they are. And if all men are the children of God, why all this specification of the special and particular mode by which they may *become* the children of God? That which already exists needs no detailed prescription as to the manner of its coming into being.

Paul announces himself clearly to the Romans on the subject of man's sonship of God: "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint

heirs of Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. viii. 15–17). Then it appears that it is the Spirit of God who creates in the human bosom this sense of divine sonship, and enables him to cry, "Abba, Father;" and the person who is not a subject of this operation has neither the power nor the right to address God as his Father. Heirship, the consummate right and privilege of sonship, is a joint heirship with Christ, and in no other manner can any human being, infant or adult, participate in the inheritance except in conjunction with copartnership with Christ. But if all men were the natural sons of God, any man would be the natural heir of God, and be entitled to seize directly upon his patrimony as something belonging to him by right, by virtue of his natural lineage from his divine ancestry. The apostle limits participation in the inheritance to those who are the copartners of the Redeemer. But if all men are the natural sons of God, by what right does the apostle restrict the inheritance to a particular class of men ?

The apostle tells the Ephesians that, prior to their conversion they "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). Instead then of these being by nature the children of God, it is categorically asserted that they and all like them are by nature the children of wrath.

In explaining the parable of the sower our Lord said, "the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one" (Matt. xiii. 38). Here "the children of the kingdom" must be held to represent some persons the very opposite of "the children of the wicked one." To construe all men as the children of God is to wipe out this classification which our Lord has been so careful to draw.

John also describes some men, not as the children of God, but as the children of the devil: "He that

committeth sin is of the devil. . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (I Jno. iii. 8–11). Here again are two kinds of children – the children of God and the children of the devil; and such a distribution is irreconcilable with the doctrine that all men are indiscriminately the children of God. To be a child of God is a distinction old and precious and priceless, worth more than all the gold of Egypt, more than all the gold of the world; and to attempt to evaporate it of all its distinction and distinctiveness by making it a common predication of all human beings is nothing short of an attempt to perpetrate a fraud, and introduce into the family and household of God persons whom he expressly and repeatedly disowns. In nothing is the apostle more explicit than in the sharp line which he draws between the children of God and the children of the devil.

Upon this question as to whether man is or is not a natural son of God, there is a great passage which fell from the lips of Jesus when he was in one of those memorable controversies which he so frequently had with the Jewish ecclesiastics and leaders: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, we be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus saith unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceedeth forth and came from God; neither came I of

myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" (Jno. viii. 37–48).

Christ brought on this controversy by saying to the Jews, "Ye are bond-slaves; ye are not freemen; if ye would receive my word and become my disciples, ye would be freemen; my word and doctrine would emancipate you." This charge of servitude incensed the Jews; and they at once took up the cudgel in their own defence; and answered him in the language of loftiest retort: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Jesus then took up their defensive statement in its inverse order. That statement consisted of two propositions, one a premise and the other a conclusion. The premise was, *We are Abraham's seed;* and the conclusion, *Therefore we are not bondmen but freemen.* Jesus took the conclusion first, and argued that if their premise were granted, still their conclusion would not follow, for whoever commits sin is the servant of sin, whether he be sprung from Abraham or from some other ancestor. Servitude, he assures them, is created by conduct and not by the accident of birth. It does not matter who a man's father may be, if he is under the orders of another and obediential to another's

will, he is a servant and not a freeman. If Abraham's children obey Satan and are subservient to his bidding, then, regardless of fatherhood, they are the servants of him to whom they bow as lord and master. "Your premise," he says, "does not contain nor support your conclusion; for though your ancestry be Abrahamic, ye have yielded yourselves to Satan in the committing of sin, and ye are, therefore, his servants and bondmen; ye are mistaken; ye are not freemen."

Having thus discussed the Jew's conclusion, and shown that it does not logically follow even when the question of their Abrahamic ancestry is conceded, our Lord turns to the main matter—the premise itself and finds as much fault with that as he did with the conclusion. Let us analyze this part of the dialogue carefully with a view to ascertaining what our Lord taught about the Fatherhood of God and the sonhood of man.

(1) The Jews said: "Abraham is our father; our freedom is ancestral; our liberty is a birthright; our hereditary rights are guaranteed to us by the covenant which God made with Abraham. To say that we are slaves is a reflection on God and a gross contradiction of history."

(2) Jesus replied: "I know well enough that ye are Abraham's seed; but there is a sense in which ye are not Abraham's seed as well as a sense in which ye are Abraham's seed. I concede that ye are Abraham's children according to the flesh, but I deny that ye are Abraham's children according to spirit, disposition and behavior. The proof that ye are not Abraham's spiritual children is the fact that ye do not the works of Abraham. Why! ye seek to kill me a man which has told you the truth of God. Abraham would not do such a deed; it would be altogether foreign to his spirit, and alien to the whole character of your great ancestor. Your deeds, your life, your

character, show that there is another somewhere in your spiritual ancestry; like father like child; but ye are unlike Abraham; ye are not of pure spiritual descent."

(3) At this the Jews burst out with hot indignation: "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. You are imputing illegitimacy and uncleanness; your effort is to smirch our descent in the most offensive manner; you concede that we are descended from Abraham according to our history, and yet you charge fornication; that charge goes back to the ancestor of the Jewish people, and the disgrace you seek to fasten upon us attaches to our progenitor. But if the great name of Abraham is not sufficient to protect our virtuous reputation, know that Abraham himself had God for his Father, and so we run our lineage beyond Abraham, and find that the crimson tides which flow through our veins bear upon their currents the embellishing glory of a divine ancestry. Reflection upon our ancestry is ultimately a taint upon Jehovah. The charge you bring against us is nothing less than devilish: we were right when we said thou hast a devil; for in charging that we are low-sprung from fornication and disreputableness you are at last but doing the devil's infamous work in besmirching the very virtue and purity of Jehovah."

(4) Jesus with great courage and calmness replied to this intemperate and extravagant criticism upon him: "If God were your Father, you would love me. I proceeded from him. I came out of his loins. I possess his spirit. I am sent into the world by him. Judge my parentage by my works. I do the works of God. I know my Father and am like him. My divinity is thus manifest. If you had the same ancestry you would manifest it in the same way. But you hate me. You seek to kill me. I have done you no harm. I have only told you the truth. Ye

are murderous in your spirit. That is not the spirit of God, your alleged Father. If ye were the children of God ye would love him, and the persons who are like him. God is not your Father. Ye are of your father the devil. His lust is your spirit and temper. He was a murderer from the beginning. Ye are just like him. The family resemblance is very close. The kinship is shown in your behavior. Overthrow my claim to divine sonship in the same way in which I assail yours. Test my claim by my life and words and spirit and conduct. Which of you convinceth me of sin? Try me: is there any thing in me or about me that is inconsistent with the claims which I thus set up? The child of God hears his voice, and obeys his will. Ye hear his words, but do them not. I hear them and do them. I do not deny that ye are sprung from Abraham according to the flesh, but I affirm that ye are sprung from the devil according to the spirit. I have not charged fleshly fornication, but I do charge spiritual fornication. One Father created you; another father hath begotten you. It is just this dual paternity—the paternity of God by creation and the paternity of the devil by practice—which makes your paternity mixed and your honor clouded and your spiritual status one of fornication and uncleanness. God is your legitimate and rightful Father; Satan is your illegitimate and adopted father. You render to him filial love and loyalty and obedience."

(5) The Jews at this angrily and indignantly closed the debate with the impetuous charge: "Thou art a Samaritan; thou hast a devil."

From this exposition it is clear that there was a sense in which the unbelieving, Christ-hating, Christ-killing, devil-serving Jews were sons of Abraham, and another sense in which they were not the sons of Abraham. They were the sons of Abraham in the sense that they were sprung from his loins and

traced their existence back to him; but they were not the sons of Abraham in the true spiritual sense. As a natural father Abraham must own them, but as "the father of the faithful" he must repudiate them. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly. . . . He is a Jew which is one inwardly" (Rom. ii. 28,29).

The parallel holds with reference to God. There is a sense in which all sinful men are the sons of God; and there is another sense in which they are not the sons of God. They are the sons of God by creation in the sense that he gave them their being and their natures; but they are not the sons of God in the obediential and spiritual sense. As a Father by creation God may recognize them: but as sinners he repudiates and disowns them. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. ix. 8).

The same is true with respect to man's subjectship. There is a sense in which he is the subject of God; there is another sense in which he is the subject of the devil. The fall did not carry him from under the divine sovereignty and jurisdiction: it brought him under the displeasure of God as a Judge and Ruler.

He is a subject, but an outlawed and proscribed subject. The government is against him, and his condemnation is sure if he is not pardoned according to the gospel scheme. The fall did not annihilate man's subjectship and remove him beyond the jurisdiction of the divine court. So is it with his original filial relation, which was adoptive in its nature: he is a discarded son, disinherited, turned out of his Father's home, dismissed from his Father's presence, and unless regenerated and re-adopted into the heavenly family according to the scheme of grace, he is sure never to see the light of his Father's

face again. Nothing of statehood and sonhood now remain to him, apart from the gospel, but the penalties of violated law and offended paternity. The great and glorious end of the gospel is to recover for him both his lost citizenship and his lost sonship.

"This relation of sonship being once established, through our personal faith, it becomes a fixed fact. Communion varies; sonship is unchangeable; communion is a thing of degrees; sonship is absolute. The most exalted saint is no more a child of God, than the weakest and most imperfect believer. The difference between the two is a difference of fellowship, and not a difference of birthright. Our acceptance with God does not lie along a sliding scale of frames and feelings, but is grounded on the unchangeable life and love of him who is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever.' Those who savingly believe therefore are the sons of God without condition, and all stand on exactly the same plane of acceptance and privilege in the household of faith. A child may be disobedient, but he does not therefore cease to be his father's son; and a Christian may lose his joy and assurance, but that does not cancel his birthright and throw him back into spiritual orphanage. But we must add, lest we should seem to lean towards Antinomian license, that there will be a vast difference in the rewards of the children of God, both as to their present joy and future glory; and this difference will depend upon the fellowship and faithfulness which they maintain in their walk with God."—*Gordon: Twofold Life, p. 100.*

III. The Scripture supports of the doctrine of man's natural sonship of God are inadequate for the purpose.

The following texts are the principal ones brought forward to sustain the contention that fallen man is today the child of God in strict literalness, upon the principle once a child always a child.

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10). "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. xii. 9). "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. i. 27). "Which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" (Luke iii. 36). "For as much then as we are the offspring of God" (Acts xvii. 29). Reliance is largely had in this connection upon the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 11–32).

I agree that these passages do fairly teach that the race in the beginning did sustain the filial relation to God along with the servile; in other words, that, at the commencement of the race's history on the earth, God was at once a Ruler and a Father, and man was at once his subject and child. The two relations are not inherently incompatible and mutually exclusive of each other: the same person may be at the same time a civil magistrate and a parent, having at his bar another person who is doubly related to him as his subject and his son. The Prince of Wales is at the same moment the subject and the son of the King of Great Britain; Christ was at once the subject and the Son of God, who was his Lord and his Father. Adam was, in the morning of his creation, both the subject and son of God, and God was his Master and his Father. But there are two characteristics of this Adamic sonship which, being overlooked, plunge us into all sorts of theological difficulties and confusions.

(1) The first pertains to the *mode* of the becoming of that sonship. It was not by generation; it was not by creation; it was by *adoption*. Subjectship rises logically and necessarily out of creaturehood, and is founded in the fact that God is the Maker of man; and sonship rises logically and necessarily out of generation, and is founded in paternity; but it is

not an immediate implicate in creatorship and creaturehood. The filial relation must be superinduced—shall I say, *artificially*—upon the creaturely relation; and the only mode by which it can be so superinduced is by a legal adoption. This, I think, was done; and a confirmation of this adopted sonship, with all its splendid immunities and privileges and rights and heritages, was held out to Adam as part of the reward for successfully enduring his probation in Eden as the federal head of the race.

Thornwell states the case in this way: "In order that the change from the condition of a servant to that of a son might take place, it was necessary that the man should prove himself faithful in the first relation. Adoption was to be a reward of grace, but still it was to be a reward. It was not a relation to be conferred in defiance of the relations that naturally subsisted betwixt God and his creature. Man was not to be arbitrarily promoted. His dignity was to come as the fruit of his obedience. It was much more than he deserved. But in the plentitude of his bounty, God proposed to add this boon of adoption over and above all that man was entitled to for his service if he should prove faithful to his trust. The purpose, therefore, to adopt the servant into the family and make him an heir, introduces an important modification of the general principles of moral government in the limitation of the period of probation, and this limitation introduces a new feature of the Divine economy, even justification."—*Writings, Vol. I., p. 266.*

Adam, (and the race in him), according to Thornwell, was created a servant with the promise of adoption as a son on condition of his fidelity to his trust: the filial relation was to be superadded to the servile; and it was distinctively a boon of grace to be shown to the race under the covenant of works. With this I agree almost exactly, yet not fully.

Adam, (and the race in him), was created a servant to be justified as a servant in an indefectible citizenship in case of his fidelity to his trust; but he was also, as a superadded blessing, made a son in the beginning by adoption to be indefectibly established in God's household in case of his fidelity to the covenant engagement. His standing in the rectoral regard of God as his subject, and his standing in the paternal regard of God as his son, were both contingent, and made to hinge upon his fidelity to his probationary condition. He, (and the race in him), began his career in the possession of both *subjectship* and *sonship*—but both mutable. The one thing needed was *confirmation*—confirmation in both relations. He sinned; he consequently fell—fell both as a subject and as a son. All the rights and blessings both of citizenship in the kingdom and sonship in the house were withdrawn from him as a judicial result of his failure. His exact status, after the fall, is that of a proscribed and condemned citizen, and an outcast and disinherited son. The gospel scheme provides for the restoration of both relations—justification for the reinstatement of the citizen in God's magisterial favor, and adoption for the reinstatement of the son in God's paternal favor. The twin graces of justification and adoption exactly meet the conditions which resulted from the fall of man.

(2) The second oversight respects the *perpetuity* of man's original sonship. It was destructible, because it was adoptive in its nature. Had it been natural in that it was either creative or generative, it would not have been terminable. It was terminable just because it was adoptive in its nature, and it was terminated because of sin.

I am aware of the distinction between the general and natural sonship of all men, on the one hand, and the special and gracious sonship of believers on the other. I admit the distinction, provided (1) they

both be construed as adoptive in nature, and provided (2) the original sonship be construed in the past tense and treated as a relation that has been terminated, and provided (3) the special and gracious sonship be limited to that portion of mankind which partakes of the election of the Father, the atonement of the Son, and the vocation of the Spirit.

Justification is primarily *in foro dei*, and secondarily and consequentially *in foro conscientiæ;* and similarly, adoption is primarily *in foro dei*, and secondarily and consequentially *in foro conscientiæ*. That is, God first conveys the rights of citizenship and sonship legally, and then they are realized consequently in the experience of the person so distinguished. Man fallen lost his standing as a subject and son in the court-room of God, and all his sinful life consists in bringing this loss more and more into his consciousness; and, similarly, man redeemed first regains his standing in the kingdom and house of God, and all his Christian life consists in bringing out into consciousness the facts and privileges of his restored relations. In gracious justification the rights and privileges of a citizen are restored; in regeneration and sanctification the spirit and temper of a citizen are developed. Similarly, gracious adoption conveys to the once disinherited son the *right* of a child; regeneration and sanctification convey the *nature* and *disposition* of a child. The blessings, in the one, are legal and objective; in the other, experimental and subjective. Adoption gives *filial rights;* regeneration and sanctification convey a *filial nature*. The great distinction to be grasped is that between a *natural adoption* in Eden, and a *gracious adoption* on Calvary.

Consequently, when latitudinarians and sentimentalizers ground the salvation of dead infants in their *natural sonship* of God, and argue that no father, much less the Heavenly Father, can, in con-

sistency with his own paternity, suffer the loss of any son or daughter, while he posesses the ability to save, as God does in the case of the dead infant whose will cannot oppose any obstacle—when the argument for infant salvation is constructed in this manner, its major premise and fundamental assumption is unscriptural and false. All men *were* the children of God; now no man, infant or adult, is the natural child of God. We must hunt for yet another basing for this faith.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Racial Theory.

This hypothesis, as viewed from various angles, and as developed by different writers, is denominated the Realistic, the Mystical, the Pantheistic, the Evolutionary, the Racial, scheme of salvation. In one way or another, it construes the human *race* as the subject of sin and redemption, and connects individuals with the consequences of the fall, and with the benefits of the atonement, by connecting them with the race.

It is very difficult of clear apprehension, and harder still of perspicuous statement. It seems next to impossible for an opponent of the view, though he do his level best to be fair and accurate, to make such an exposition of it as one of its friends will admit to be even tolerable. I shall attempt to deal with it only as a type of opinion, give its radical principles, as I understand them, and endeavor to point out how it ought to be logically applied to the explanation of the salvation of the dead infant. If any of its adherents think I am altogether wrong in its interpretation, I will acknowledge that, after much labor, I do not understand it. I will, at the outset, however, bolster myself and condone my inability to comprehend the theory by quoting from

Dr. Candlish, who was able both to think and to understand:

"I would not like the inference which I deduce from the fact of the incarnation to be confounded with the notion, which seems much in vogue in certain quarters, of that great event having somehow affected beneficially humanity in the general; the human nature as such; the human race universally and at large; so as to impress a kind of filial character on the intuitional apprehension which all men are said to have of God, and on the position which they occupy towards him. I confess, I can never feel quite sure that I thoroughly understand the language used on this subject by the class of writers I refer to; it seems to me so vague and hazy. I would not do them injustice. And, therefore, I wish it to be observed, that it is not my present object to comment on their opinions, but only to make my own meaning clear. The idea of some at least seems to be, that the Son of God, becoming man, has taken all manhood, wherever and in whomsoever found, into a sort of incorporating union with himself as regards his sonship; that simply in consequence and in virtue of humanity being a partaker of the filial relation in his human person, it is so in all human persons; that altogether apart from any dealing with men individually, the Son, having assumed the nature common to all, invests that nature everywhere with the dignity which it has in him, and makes all who possess it *ipso facto* sons. Whether I am right or wrong in believing that to be the teaching of any theologians is not for the present argument of any consequence. All I wish to say is that it is not mine."—*Fatherhood of God, p. 45.*

The following is a sketch of my reduction of the racial theory, as I understand it:

1. Divinity and humanity are two distinct and real, though abstract, substances—the one (divinity) having eternally come to a threefold personality in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, while the other (humanity) is still in the process of coming to multipersonality in the countless members of the human family.

2. Divinity and humanity have immanent and reciprocal aptitudes for union with each other, in some manner analogous to the chemical affinity oxygen and hydrogen have for each other: the one (divinity) yearning downwards for humanity, and the other (humanity) yearning upwards for divinity, and neither can be ideally perfect, until it has been complemented by the other. Metaphysically akin to each other are divinity and humanity.

3. All divine activities and all human history are but movements of divinity and humanity towards the goal, namely, a metaphysical monad, which is some sort of a compound of divinity and humanity, fused into an organic unity. The depotentiation of the one (divinity), and the impotentiation of the other (humanity), must continue, until the evolutionary process, however inscrutable its modes, has culminated in an absolute and an indiscerptible unity.

4. Divinity, by virtue of its own immanent necessities of nature, somehow evolved humanity personalized in Adam and Eve, who were the bisexual fountain of the race, capable of an indefinite reproduction of their species, and thus individuating and personalizing generic humanity.

5. Before divinity could unite with generic humanity in Eden, and thereby insure the reproduction of an ideal race of ideal individuals, Adam, in the exercise of free will, corrupted the nature of humanity by sinning against God, and thereby rendered the union of divinity and humanity impossible, by making humanity morally unfit for the amalgamation; converting it into a repulsive, instead of an attractive, thing to divinity. After the fall, which was but a miscarriage in the evolutionary schedule, both are antithetic and reciprocally repulsive to each other. If something does not transpire to restore congeniality, both divinity and humanity must come

short of the ideal, and be eternally incomplete and falsely developed.

6. In the fulness of time and process, that something transpired: the Son of God became incarnate. Being in the form of God, he emptied himself—denuded his divinity—became a human babe in Bethlehem; then gradually reimpotentiated himself, growing in stature and wisdom, until at his baptism, or at his ascension, he raised himself upwards to divinity; and so for all eternity presents to the universe the phenomenon of a divine-human being—the realization of the reciprocal yearnings of divinity and humanity for an organic union with each other. In this way Christ has become a new life-centre—the new starting point for the realization of an ancient ideal—a Second Adam, achieving precisely the thing which was designed to occur in Eden, but which miscarried because of the wrong action of the first Adam.

7. Now the world is the theater of two races—the old and the new—the Adamic and the Christic—side by side—the one (Adamic) gendering death, the other (Christic) gendering life—the one (Adamic) a pervert, and the other (Christic) ideal—each evolving, by their respective inherent forces antithetical destinies—the finale of one (Adamic) being hell, of the other (Christic) being heaven. The purpose of the incarnation of Jesus was not primarily to save sinners, but to effect the union of divinity and humanity; and the mode of the incarnation was not voluntary, but immanent and evolutionary; and it was not the Second Person of the Godhead, which voluntarily took to himself a human nature, which had been supernaturally created out of the substance of the virgin, but it was the divinity, which was in the Son, which united with the humanity, which was in the virgin; the result was the evolution of a new species—a new sort of race—a theanthropic family,

with the divine-human Christ as its founder and progenitor. As the abstract substance of the old (Adamic) race is *humanity*, so the abstract substance of the new (Christic) race is *Christianity*. The name of the old race, as organized, is the kingdom of Satan, or the "world;" the name of the new race, as organized, is the kingdom of God, or the "Church." The death of Christ was not primarily an atonement in the orthodox sense, but an incident in the incarnation, the incident in which his latent potentialities flowered in the fulness of his conscious union with divinity.

8. The superlative desideratum for salvation is, the transferrence of a member of the old (Adamic) race to membership in the new (Christic) race. And how can it be done? By the Spirit's *regeneration* of the Adamic member—a literal regeneration. The sinner literally must be born again, born of the Spirit, who communicates to him the Christic nature, and thereby introduces him into the new race (the Church), as by his *generation* the Adamic nature was communicated to him, and he was thereby made a member of the old race (the world). By faith this regenerated member of the old Adam lays hold upon Christ as his theanthropic life; on account of his new nature he is justified and accepted of God; and in sanctification he grows to the fulness of the statue of Christ Jesus.

9. But how is all this applicable to the salvation of a dead infant? To answer this question we must ask, What is an infant? An infant is defined, at least by the friends of the theory, as more than a *thing* but less than a *person*. A *thing* has no self-consciousness; a *person* has self-decision. An infant comes in between, and is a human being, having self-consciousness in the process of developing into self-decision. It is a *human individual which has not attained to self-grasp and self-decision;* it

possesses humanity, but not personality. Personality (self-decision) is the only force in the human individual, which can pervert human development, cause the ideal to fail of attainment; but the infant died before it attained personality, and therefore before it had the power to become sinful or abnormal. Christ united with humanity, and in uniting with it sanctified it; consequently the dead infant is morally imperishable, and is saved by the incarnation of our Lord. To state it in other words: an infant is humanity individuated; Christ is humanity and divinity united; therefore the humanity of the infant is united to the divinity in Christ; then the infant dies before it becomes personal, that is, before it can by its free will pervert the course of evolution; therefore the dead infant is salvable, because it is impersonal. It is *germinally* sound, and dies before it has any miscarriage in its growth. A grain of corn may be germinally sound; if it grows, it may bring forth a blasted ear; if it is ground before it is planted, it is sure to make wholesome meal. An infant is germinally sound; if it lives to maturity it may come to personality; if it comes to personality, it may make a blighted man; if it dies, it will not come to personality; if it does not come to personality, it will never make a degenerate man.

If any one charges that I have lifted this scheme bodily out of my imagination, I can only reply that I do not charge it, in its entirety, upon any one author; that I have attempted an honest reduction of a general type of theologizing, of the meaning of whose terms and modes of reasoning I never feel certain; and that I could fortify myself with some quotations which, at least, read very much like the things which I have written.

If this whole racial and sociological conception of Christianity breaks down, of course as a philosophy

of infant salvation it cannot be held to be adequate and satisfactory.

I. This system, which sets out to redeem the dead infant by redeeming the *race* of which it is a member, is untenable, because it is founded upon the abandoned philosophy of realism. Ideas, from which all the individuals have been abstracted in thought, are not substantive realities, but mere conceptions of the mind. We form them for the sake of the economies of speech, but they are not objective entities. Substances, from which all phenomena have been abstracted by the mind for its convenience, do not exist apart and in themselves. We know nothing of power, in itself, and apart from its effects. There are no essences in the concrete, without any qualifying attributes; there is no such thing as *whiteness*, except *in mente;* no such thing as animality, apart from individual animals; no such thing as personality, separated from all persons; no such thing as *humanity*, from which all individual men have been abstracted; no such thing as *divinity*, isolated from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These are all, as abstractions, only mental concepts, coined for the conveniences of communication: the *universalia ante rem* and the *universalia post rem* have existence only in the mind; the *universalia in re* is the only objective reality. But the soteriology I criticise assumes that *divinity* and *humanity*, as abstract terms, connote two distinct and concrete metaphysical substances, though naked and stripped of all persons, capable of action and reaction, and of sympathizing with each other, and of yearning each for the other. The predication of *concrete* activities of *abstract* terms is a contradiction.

II. The theory is theologically unsound, in representing divinity and humanity, as abstract natures, as yearning for union with each other—each ideally

incomplete without the other. The sphericity of divinity is infinite, integral, and perfect, and stands not at all in need of any union with humanity in order to fill out to the full its own individual roundness or wholeness; and humanity, as a finite atom, is possessed of all its contents, and the *quantum* of its substance, and the complement of its metaphysical properties, stand in no need of any sort of aggregation in order to complete to the circumference its ideal circle of perfection: there is no kind of vacuity in either divinity or humanity, necessitating any sort of merging of the two, to round out their idealism, o- conceptual type. Each is metaphysically perfect—the one (divinity), in its infinitude; the other (humanity), in its finitude.

Were it not so, there would be an immanent necessity, inherent in the very nature of divinity as ideally incomplete, to evolve the universe as the antithesis of itself as the thesis; and a similar necessity for the organic and metaphysical union of divinity and the universe to obtain the ideally perfect synthesis. The argument would prove the necessity of the evolution of an objectified universe, as contradistinguished from the traditional doctrine of a free and voluntary creation, on the one hand; and then the argument would overreach itself by proving, not merely the necessity of the metaphysical union of divinity and humanity, but the immanent necessity of the absorption into deity of the entire universe—mineral, vegetable, animal, and human—in order to complete the cosmic ideal, on the other hand. The result would be full-fledged Pantheism—both in the origination and destination of the whole universe.

Such consequences are too appalling to justify the Christian mind in temporizing with principles so radical, in the effort to construct a fresh and novel theory of salvation. There is not, and from the nature of the case there cannot be, any reciprocal yearnings

of divinity and humanity for a metaphysical amalgamation with each other: each is metaphysically complete and ideal.

III. Nor is the case materially improved, if we change the terms, and figure the union for which divinity and humanity reciprocally long, to be a *vital* instead of a metaphysical union: we still have a conation of two abstract and depersonalized natures, neither of which, as abstract, has any objective being, and neither of which, even did they really exist outside of the mind of man, has any faculties or power of activity of any kind. Such powers have all been thought away in the very act of forming the concepts. And, besides, the effort to unify—to communalize—the *life* of God and the *life* of man is to plunge us headlong into fog-banks, and mystifications through which we could never thread our way to sound and intelligible conclusions. The divine life is a force (*energe* in the Greek, *energy* in the English) immanent, underived and infinite in its nature, and incapable of being imparted to any creature in any realistic sense: and human life is a force which God has created by his power, possessing its own finite and dependent being. Electricity, gravity, heat, light, etc., are real, though second and created causes, distinct from the divine power while dependent upon it; so human life is a true cause, though vital and distinct in its nature, and separated from the life of God. As well attempt to merge all cosmic second causes into the almightiness of God, and deny all efficiency to physical forces, as to seek to merge the life of man, a specific sort of second cause, into the primal and causative life of God. The proposition to unite divinity and humanity into a life-communion, is tantamount to the obliteration of all distinction between the First and second causes, and the reduction of the universe to entire dependence upon God as regards all causal efficiency.

The life of God is one life; the life of man is another life; and the two will remain separate and distinct as long as the eternity of God and the immortality of man endure. A community of life logically implies an identity of being.

The extreme evolutionist begins with the assumption of one, or at least a few, primordial homogeneous germs, and from them, as seed-corns, he evolves the heterogeneous universe of flora and fauna and humana; and his conclusion is that all living things are essentially the same in kind, though specifically different; and that every living thing partakes of a common vitality. The fully developed and unfearing evolutionist construes divinity as that primordial germ, and out of it generates the entire content of the cosmic sphere: and then continues the cosmic development until all things grow back into divinity; and so completes the circular process. This schedule is as fictitious as it is romantic.

As far as God and man may be truly represented as having desires, or yearnings, for union with each other, the *locus* of those desires is not in their metaphysical *natures* on the one hand, nor in their *vitalities* on the other, but its seat must be in their *personal sensibilities*. Only as persons can either have any longings for the other. As abstract divinity, God has no existence; as abstract humanity, man has no being; we must get out of the realm of bare abstraction, and come into the range of concrete persons, before we can construct any scheme of intelligible soteriology for either the infant or the adult; and because certain religious teachers persist in floundering among abstract generalizations, they muddle themselves with their speculations, and befuddle sinners with their exposition of the gospel.

If I mistake not, the Christian world feels its faith being woefully depleted by these speculations, and is

desperately weary with these attempts to convert the gospel into metaphysics.

IV. The only sort of union between God and man which is possible, or at all recognized in Scripture, is *personal* and *ethical* in its nature.

The Gospel problem is absolutely simple, level to the comprehension of the veriest dullard: How can two persons, estranged from each other, be reconciled, so that they can live together in mutual good will, sympathy, and fellowship? God, as one person, has become deeply offended at man, another person, on account of his sinning; their natures, tempers, dispositions, ideals, purposes, are diametrically opposite; God is at enmity (righteously) with man, and man is at enmity (unrighteously) with God; the unchanged natures of neither will permit communion with the other; all friendly relations and intercourse have been interrupted; the desideratum is reconciliation, a reconciliation which will not be superficial in its character, but one which will join the two so deeply that they will forever think the same thoughts, have the same feelings, and act in perfect concert. This is the simple gospel question, which any sinful dunderhead can understand.

To answer it, we have but to put our finger on the causes of the estrangement, and then to look at the evangelical provision for removing them out of the way; then, these obstacles and hinderances being out of the way; an indissoluble pact of friendship and congeniality and happiness emerges. When we carry the question below consciousness, and endeavor to find some sort of underpinning out of sight; when we seek to find some underground, mythical union of metaphysical and abstract natures, or some impalpable and intangible racial connection behind the scenes, or some mystical merging of the life of each into the other, so as to present the phenomenon of a colossal heart beating in a common service to

both, we have carried the question out of sight, and lost the simple gospel in a murky fog-bank.

There are but two causes of separation between God and man—*guilt* and *depravity*. Remove these, and the gate of heaven swings wide open, and God will clasp the sinner in arms of love and benediction, and the sinner will kneel at his feet with joy and praise. It is a shame and a crime to swamp that gospel, which alone emits a single ray to cheer the dying sinner's soul, in the befogging speculations of intangible metaphysics.

Over against the *guilt* of sin, stands Christ and his atonement; and over against the *defilement* of sin, stands the Spirit and his regeneration, as it expands into the broad work of sanctification. By the sacrificial death of the one (Christ), God is reconciled to man; by the converting and purifying work of the other (the Spirit), man is reconciled to God. The "blood" of the one (Christ) placates the offended Deity; the "water" of the other (the Spirit) placates an estranged and hostile man. By the cross of the one (Christ) a redemptive "platform" is erected upon which God can stand, and, in honor and self-respect, clasp hands with the guilty sinner—be just and yet be justifier of the ungodly; by the grace of the other (the Spirit), the disposition and appetencies of the sinful heart are so purged and rectified, that his soul and his flesh cry out for the living God. The atonement procures the love of God for man; the Spirit procures the love of man for God. What other result can follow, but communion, fellowship, congeniality, friendship, companionship, intercourse, blessedness? Every interest of truth, of justice, of law, of government, has been amply and honorably satisfied by the death of Christ; and every view, and appetency, and inclination, and desire, and purpose in the heart of man has been revolutionized and sanctified by the Spirit, when he has completed his subjective work

of grace: reconciliation is complete, and the felicity of heaven is consequential and necessary. There is in it all, no occultation and no obfuscation: God as a person has been honorably and perfectly reconciled to man, and man has been perfectly and entirely reconciled to God: the atonement terminated upon an estranged God, and the work of the Spirit terminated upon an estranged soul: reconciliation and fellowship was the result.

I find myself continually, and aggressively, opposed to this theological tendency, whether it takes on the complexion of a pantheistic, or mystic, or realistic, or evolutionary, or racial, hue, because it engenders metaphysical, rather than evangelical, problems. The atonement comes to us in the moral world, and deals with us there; raises and answers questions concerning the conscience of man, and the law of God; deals with sin and grace, with alienation and peace, with religious death and religious life; and so has its being and efficacy in a world, where we can find our footing, and know that we are dealing with tangible realities. This whole theory can never become credible and satisfying, because it is always hazy enough to be mysterious and mystifying. It does not answer the questions which a soul, on the brink of moral despair, in agony raises; at best, it is but a speculation about divinity and humanity, which are a pair of abstractions, created by the mind for the economies of communicating; and, if we start in an abstract and speculative way, we can never get specifically at the needs of a concrete, sin-burdened conscience. Nothing can ever be fundamental to the gospel of saving grace, which is not directly germane to the problem—How can a sinful man be just with God?

Uuder sundry figures, the Scriptures do teach us the doctrine of a "mystical and vital union with Christ," as it is described by theologians. In one

place it is likened to the union of the vine and the branches (Jno. xv. 1–5); in another, to the olive tree and its limbs (Rom. xi. 16–24); in another, to the head and the members of the human body (Eph. iv. 15, 16); in another, to union between husband and wife (Eph. v. 31, 32); in another, to the foundations and the stones in a living house (I Pet. ii. 4–6); in another, and intensest of all, to the union between the Father and the Son in the Godhead (Jno. xvii. 20, 21).

These are all similes and metaphors; but as every figure of speech must have some basis in reality to justify it, these, when reduced to literal language, must import a relationship between Christ and his people exceedingly close and precious. But there is also a vicious interpretation of the emblems and tropes of Scripture, which gets more out of them than the Spirit ever put into them. It is perilous even to forget, that they are illustrative and not dogmatic.

To argue that, because the vine and its branches are of the same substance, and have a common sap; or because the head and members in the human body are the same sort of flesh, and have a common blood circulation; or because the foundations and walls of a building are made of the same stone, and are held together by a common cement;—to argue from such analogies, as premises, to the conclusion that Christ and Christians are of the same substance, and have a unitary life, is to press Scripture metaphors into a dogmatic and prosaic service beyond limits that are legitimate, and to exemplify a method of interpretation which has been, from the days of Origen, prolific of religious vagaries and extravagancies of the most appalling nature.

It is truly called "mystical," not because it is a union incomprehensible, and incapable of being intelligibly stated; but because it is not external, and patent to the senses. It is denominated "vital," not

because, out of sight and underground, the theanthropic life of Christ and his people are identical, but for the reason that, "because Christ lives, his people live also"—their living is grounded in, and conditioned upon, his living in his mediatorial work. It is described as "spiritual," not because it is vague and sublimated, but because the Holy Spirit is the bond of the fellowship, and communion between Christ and the saints. The Holy Ghost, the third person of the Godhead, dwells in the bosom of Christ, the Theanthropos, the divine-human Redeemer, and sustains all his redemptive career; and this self-same Spirit also dwells in the spirits of all Christians, and sustains their faith, repentance, and all evangelical graces; so that Christ and Christians are but the Spirit communalized in thought, feeling, purpose, disposition, and destiny.

Though the Scriptures do thus assert a true and proper indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the converting and sanctifying power of the believer's soul, yet I see nothing in the Bible to warrant herefrom the inference, that there is any literal conjunction, or fusion, of the divinity in Christ with the humanity in the believer; much less literal and local transubstantiation, or consubstantiation, of the whole mediatorial person of the Redeemer, including both his divinity and his humanity, with the Christian soul.

If we could grasp the truth, that "grace" is the biblical technicality for that influence of the Spirit which is exercised in the salvation of a sinner, mystifications would be dissolved like the clouds, and a clear gospel would emerge to view. Here are two estranged persons to be reconciled; Christ by his atoning death provides a basis, upon which they can be united in friendship; and the Spirit undertakes to apply the scheme, and make it effective in the experience of the sinner. The power which he exerts, *quoad hoc*, is called "grace;" and faith and

repentance and justification and adoption and sanctification—the whole cluster of Christian virtues, which ornament saintly character and render it attractive and lovable to God, are "graces," or "fruits of the Spirit." These gracious influences exerted by the Spirit upon the carnal mind which is at enmity with God, results in a pact of sympathy and friendship, but do not weld the two into any sort of metaphysical oneness. By him the sinner is awakened, convicted, enlightened, and changed in his views and feelings towards God, until, when it is all perfected and consummated, he flies into the embrace of the Saviour with a cry of great joy. He transforms us, that we may belong to Christ; he transfigures us, that we may be lovely to Christ; by his grace he transmutes our characters, but he does not transubstantiate us, so that we cease to be our true and proper selves, fully conscious of our own personal identity.

V. This whole conception of the method of salvation is radically erroneous, in that it *centralizes faith upon the Incarnation, instead of upon the Cross.*

It was in the incarnation of Christ, that divinity and humanity were mystically united, and to this union, we are told, the sinner must look for his redemption, as resulting in some mode from the reciprocal clasping together of these two abstract natures. Consequently the incarnation, not the cross, is the pivot of the Gospel, and the point upon which faith needs to concentrate its intensest gaze. The cry of this school of expositors is, Away from Calvary, and, Back to Bethlehem.

Dr. Smyth says, it is "not God's sovereign will, not God's eternal decree, but God himself, God in Christ, is the central truth and glory in Christian life and thought. From this return to the Christological centre of Christian theology, we are to gain also enlarged views of the fact of the incarnation: of its central significance in the idea of moral creation;

of its posible cosmical relation."—*Watts: New Apologetic, p. 198.*

Bishop Martensen has, ably and learnedly, evolved his entire system of dogmatics with the incarnation as his organific principle.

Dr. Gerhart follows Bishop Martensen, and uses "the Christ-idea," or the incarnation, as the fundamental principle upon which he builds all his theology, and by which he evolves his soteriology, making the point, that we are saved by the union of divinity and humanity in Christ's person, rather than by the death of Christ, and the merits of his sacrificial blood. In describing the relation between the humanity and divinity in Christ, this able theologian notes four essential points:

"1. The relation between God and Man in the person of Jesus Christ is *internal;* it is brought about, not by forces foreign either to the infinitude of the Creator or the finitude of the creature, but by virtue of an original affinity and sympathy between the finite personal creature and the infinite personal Creator; there is adaptation of the nature of each to the nature of the other.

2. Being internal the relation is also vital or *organic.* The absolute life of God and the relative life of man become in Christ one personal life.

3. The organic relation involves *ethical* unity. The life of God is the life of absolute love. The normal life of man is the life of love in God. God's love to man and man's capacity of love towards God are essential conditions of the personal union of God and man in Christ.

4. The union of divine life and infinite love and of human life of finite love implies an *historical process.* The union has epochs and stages through which it passes according to laws and growth. It has a beginning, an onward progress, and a final consummation."—*Institutes, Vol. I., p. 155.*

But how is the sinner to be coupled with the incarnate Christ so as to obtain the inflow of his life

into the life of the soul? This theologian has a way of explaining this practical matter:

"Pentecost is a creative epoch. The gift of the Holy Spirit brings into being a spiritual constitution which before had no existence. The epoch may be compared to natural birth. Birth in one respect is the natural result of an antecedent process of the growth of the embryo; in another respect it constitutes a new individual and begins a new history. So whilst pentecost is the legitimate consequence of the mediatorial life and work of the incarnate Son on earth, this event brings into existence a new human race and begins a history for all time to come which in point of quality is different from all other history, Jewish or pagan. This new race is the community of the Christian Church, the body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. . . Pentecost, since it quickens a human race, fashioned after the new type in Christ, is a creative epoch. . . Comparatively considered, the mediatorial work of Christ consists in making his divine-human personality the foundation for the communication of his Holy Spirit. . . The Spirit does not beget a person anew by implanting Christ into him. By the Spirit he is implanted into Christ. . . As we are members of the Adamic race by participation in the life of the first Adam so we become members of the second race by participation in the life of the last Adam. . . This new birth by which men become 'members of Christ' is a mystery parallel to the nativity of our Lord; by conception and birth human nature in him was created anew. As through the overshadowing of the Virgin by 'the power of the Most High' Jesus was conceived and born, so by a similar overshadowing of the Spirit of Christ glorified men are born into his kingdom. By incarnation human nature was assumed into organic union with God in His Son; so by the new-creating work of the Holy Spirit men are translated from 'this world' into mystical union with our risen, perfected Lord."—*Institutes, Vol. II., pp. 441-452.*

The objections to the position and services, in the economy of redemption, assigned by this hypothesis to the incarnation, and the salvation of the racial

nature by it, are fatal, and hopelessly discredit it at the bar of evangelical thought.

(1) It fails of its own purpose. It aims to set aside the sovereign decree of God, as the central principle in theology, and put in its room the incarnation of Christ. If it were successful in the substitution, then the benefits of redemption would not be distributable according to the divine election, and upon a principle of sovereign grace, but according to a schedule determined by the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, and upon the principle of the evolution of man's metaphysical connection with God. The blessings of salvation would not come from without, as the donations of grace and the bestowments of the divine will, but they would rise from within, and be altogether subjective in the mode of their coming into Christian experience. But, granting that the advent of Christ in human form was the sublimest event in the annals of time or records of eternity, it was in the execution of the eternal decree of God that he came into this sinful world at all, and, apart from that decree, it would have no redemptive significance whatever. We cannot be unmindful of that great statement, in which the apostle reminds the Galatians that, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4,5). At the opportune moment in the world's history, at the hour when the conjunction of the items in the divine plan called for it, God "sent forth his Son:" this sending by his Father, precludes the idea that he was evolved into the world, as the result of an immanent conation of divinity to unite with humanity. Our Lord persistently explained his own advent in this way: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jno. vi. 38). This

"coming" on the part of the Son, conjoined with this "sending" on the part of the Father, distinctly indicates an advent, which was voluntary, and not fluxive, and a mission which was in the interest of a prearranged redemptive plan. In the Hebrews, the apostle, quoting the Psalms, represents God as having no further pleasure in ceremonial offerings and sacrifices, and Christ as crying out, "Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me), I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Heb. x. 7). The "book" in which it was thus written of Christ was the book of the divine decrees; and the Saviour came into the world, delighted to execute the divine purpose, concerning the salvation of sinners. The incarnation itself was according to an eternal programme, drawn by the divine will, and made a link in the chain of means to the end of saving God's people. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world"—not to be incarnated—but "to save sinners" (I Tim. i. 15).

(2) This theory falsely interprets the purpose of the incarnation. There was a Bethlehem in order that there might be a Calvary: Christ was born that he might die. The incarnation was not an end in itself; it was a means to the atonement as an end. His mission into the world, his entry into human nature, was not to form a metaphysical juncture of humanity and divinity, but it was primarily, and altogether, redemptive in its object; he came to save sinners. His incarnation and all other facts in his biography were ancillary to this as the chief end. Had there been no sin; had there been no scheme of redemption to be executed; the Son of God would never have been humiliated. The redemptive problem, which he came to solve, required of him that he do two things: (a) that he lay down his life, and (b) that he take it again: he must both die and live. He must be human, in order to lay down his life; he

must be divine, in order to take it again; he must be a divine-human person, in order to unify this redemptive work. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14,15). Here is an explicit definition of the very *raison d'etre* of his partaking of flesh and blood, namely; that he might die, and through that death deliver men from the power of the devil. Incarnation, therefore, was not for his own sake, but for the sake of the atonement. When, therefore, this theory centres the eye of faith upon the birth of Christ, instead of upon the death of Christ, it shows itself unpardonably ignorant of the true purpose and object of the incarnation.

(3) When this theory substitutes the cradle for the cross, it takes away the crown and glory of the gospel. The great apostle did not say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the *incarnation* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by which divinity is united to humanity, and humanity is united to divinity;" but he did say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is *crucified* unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). The cross and crucifixion are thus singled out, as the articulate points in evangelical preaching, the very ground of all Christian congratulation, the power and wisdom of God unto salvation.

(4) The death, not the birth, of Christ is the theme of the saints in glory. When Jesus was born, the stars stood still over the manger, angelic choirs broke forth from the galleries of the skies, wise men hastened to his cradle with their votive offerings of spice and myrrh and frankincense, and morning

glories were hung upon the trellis of this sin-darkened world; but it was all because he who had come, had come to make his life an offering for sin, and through that death to reconcile God to man. When our vision runs forward to that sacramental host, clad in robes that have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, circling the throne of God day and night, the apocalyptic angel breaks the seal, and gives us the words of the "new song," which tells the reason for all their heavenly gladness: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. v. 9,10). The doxology of atoning blood is, then, the theme of the song of the saints in glory; the Lamb *slain*, the inspiration of all their hallelujahs. The Church on earth, consequently, cannot be wrong, when it instals the death of Jesus as the fundamental fact of the Christian system.

The proposition, therefore, to save the dead infant by supposing some mysterious participation in some mysterious union of humanity and divinity, is tantamount to a proposition to exclude the child in heaven from participation in the song of glory, even as it sought to exclude it from participation in the hymn of grace on earth. I am zealous to give to the dead children a place in the throng, and a part in the song, which praises ths atoning blood of the Lamb.

VI. The human race has no solidarity in the realistic sense presupposed by this theory of redemption, which construes the *racial* substance as that upon which the redemptive work of the gospel terminates.

The gospel of the "new humanity," which promises to usher in a new day for religious thought,

assumes that the whole quantum of human substance, body and soul, was evolved, when, as a result of the preceding cosmic process, Adam and Eve made their appearance on the earth; and that this generic humanity, which was in the first pair, has, by a genetic process, been individualized and personalized into that multitude of men and women which constitute the membership of the human race; consequently the human race, viewed as a multitude of units, was primarily a realistic solid, which has been fractionalized, and differentiated, by the natural law of propagation. A mass of rock is fractured into many pieces; each fragment is a piece of the same limestone; the fracturing force has been mechanical —a hammer. Humanity was a solid, like the stone; it too has been fractured into many units; each unit however is a person; each person is a homogeneous fragment of the common humanity; the fractural force has been generation; consequently the essential attributes of humanity descend, by heredity, into each variety and into each individual of the race. If the primary germ was sinful and morally contaminated, each subsequent personalization of, and derivate from, the original must likewise be held to be sinful and contaminated. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness;" but, at the moment of the begetting, Adam was sinful and morally contaminated; the genetic law, "like begets like," applies, and carries down the sinful nature and image of the father to the son. So the race is an organic solid; and, as a whole, it must be corrupted, if corrupted in any of its parts; and, as a whole, it must be redeemed, if redeemed in any of its members. As one writer of this way of thinking expresses it, "All must be saved if any are." The human race is an organic unit; its members constitute an irrefragible brotherhood; each person is linked in destiny with every other person; the same evolution evolved all that evolved one; the

same gracious evolution, which sanctifies and raises to heaven one member, similarly sanctifies and glorifies every member of the racial unit. All cosmic, all divine, all historic processes, have to deal only with this racial unit, this organic human solid.

Again, we are told that it is illogical to limit the evolving process to this life, or to this world. What has been begun must go on, before and after death, until the ascensive process has raised the racial unit to its highest, or heavenly, stage of developmet. The human infant is but a factor, or item, in the racial solid, and must, before or after death, at some time, or in some way, and in some world, ultimately come to maturity at the top of the racial history. Nothing can be lost—no dead child can perish—because there can be no waste in the great cosmic evolution, which must utilize every unit, and every item, in order to obtain the goal of divine purpose—a race possessing the attribute of solidarity in the kingdom of glory.

The dynamic impulse in the divine heart—we are told—is love; that love, moving from within outward, yearns for, what ?—not for individual men, but for a *human race;* to gratify that central love, the human race came into being; that race fell into sin, and, unless something be done, that fall must eventuate in a racial development, and progress *away from God*, which would defeat his purpose and disappoint his love, and embitter his heart; his Son came as a second Adam—a second Man—a new race centre of life and development. It is, therefore, the *racial unit* which is contemplated in redemption; and the infant's participation in the race's life insures its participation in the race's redemption, because of the race's solidarity in communion, brotherhood, and destiny.

(1) The race is not a solid, but an aggregation of persons. A community of origin, a similarity of metaphysical natures, a common experience, social

relations, neither import nor necessitate the conclusion, however sophistically and attractively expressed, that all men are one man. James and John were the sons of Zebedee and Salome, but they were two distinct and separable personal integers, and any scheme, however plausible, which seeks to fuse their individuality, and find some underground way of construing them as a unity, outrages common sense, and convicts itself of being the veriest jugglery. And if this cannot be done with two concrete persons, how much less can the countless multitudes of the human family be treated, and construed, as if they were not many persons, but one! The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one substance—one divinity—but three persons; Peter, James, and John are three persons and three substances—three humanities—albeit the humanity in each is *like* the humanity in the other. The entire substance of the Godhead is in the Father, and at the same time in the Son, and at the same time in the Spirit: below their tripersonality, the three are substantively and realistically one. But the humanity in Peter, James, and John is segmental—each segment is similar and integral, but not numerically identical: they are three substances and three persons. The supreme error in the conception of the "new humanity" consists in its effort to construe the constitution of the Trinity as the analogue of the constitution of the human race. The traditional orthodoxy, since the council of Nicea, has taught that the constitution of the Godhead was *homoousian*, while the constitution of the human race is *homoiousian;* that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are *identical* in substance, but *different* in personality, while Peter, James and John are *similar* in substance, while they are *distinct* in personality. The Trinity is a metaphysical solid; but the race is a metaphysical plurality. Peter could die, and James and John continue to live; but if one

Person in the Godhead were to die, all the Persons in the Godhead would die. And if one Person in the Godhead were to become incarnate, in the *evolutionary* mode, all the Persons in the Godhead would become incarnate for the same reason. Hence the Second, the Son, may become incarnate without involving the Father and the Spirit, only upon the assumption of the orthodox view, that he *voluntarily* took to himself a true body and a reasonable Soul.

When, therefore, one member of the human race comes into being, he is a distinct and separate person, a "punctual item," complete in himself, but having *social* relations to other human persons. He is a member of the human family, but the family itself is not a realistic monad; it is a group of kinspeople, having a common origin and common relations. The family, as distinct from the individual members of the family, is no entity at all. So, in a wider sense, the race, as separated from all the individuals of the race, is a pure mental concept, and has no realistic being whatever. The community of origin, which all the members of the race have, renders them *kin* to each other; their community in experience renders them sympathetic; their community of relations renders them a society or a family. But abstract all the individuals from the race, and you have nothing left but a hollow, empty coinage of the mind.

Does the race exist for the individual, or does the individual exist for the race? This is a vexatious question. Let us change its form, so that it will answer itself: Was it God's chief purpose in creating man to obtain a *race*, or a number of *persons* sustaining racial relations to each other? Is it not perfectly patent that the *race* is but a means, or instrumentality, in the providence of God, for the introduction into this world of a multitude of human *individuals*? If so, the effort to construe God's

chief concern as centering upon the *race*, and secondarily upon the *members* of the race, is illogical to the point of approximating the absurd.

But if he uses the racial force for the generation of the members of the race, why may he not use the same racial force for the regeneration of the members of the same race? For the reason, that there is no such thing as a racial force. Children are not the products of the racial force: they are the offspring and procreation of the distinct persons—a father and a mother. We are but employing one of the economies of speech when we talk about *racial force*: it is a bare abstraction.

The human race, therefore, is not a realistic solid; but on the contrary it is an assemblage of concrete human persons, having a common ancestry, similar attributes, and existing, not in isolation, but in relations to each other. The effort, consequently, to account for the salvation of the dead infant by construing it as a germinal and undeveloped member of the human commune, which commune Christ has redeemed, is to ground the doctrine upon an utter misconception of the very nature and purpose of the racial idea in the divine administration.

(2) But when we turn, away from these abstractions and obfuscations about the organization of the race, to the Scriptures, that sure and plain word of prophecy, it becomes perfectly lucid that the gospel is addressed to persons, and terminates upon persons. However acquired, men are charged with individual responsibility, and held as individual sinners, to suffer punishment, not in the racial conscience, nor yet in the racial mass, but in their own individual and personal consciences. It is the individual as such, and the race only as made up of individual persons, that is convicted of sin, and caused to cry out, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." It is the individual, and not the race, which must be born

again, before the kingdom of God can be seen or enjoyed. It is the individual Philippian jailor, who was pricked in conscience, and required to believe for the pacification of his moral nature. It is the individual that is justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and not the race of which he was a member. And so the enumeration might go on almost indefinitely, to illustrate that the demands of the gospel are made upon individuals and persons, and to contradict the imagination that the racial stuff is the matter upon which the Spirit operates. The problem is not to save the race as a race, but to save the individual and personal members of the race. And so the problem is not to save the race of which the infant is a member, but to save the infant who is a member of the race, an incapable person and an undeveloped individual.

The theory, which puts the doctrine of the "new humanity" below the dead infant, as an adequate account of the mode of its salvation, fails; because as an evolutionary theory, it is confessedly occult, and not understood; and as a realistic theory, there is no such entity as racial solidarity.

CHAPTER IX.

Post Mortem Probation.

The exigensies of the debate over the dead infant, coupled with a zeal and a determination to conserve certain theological premises, have driven a class of religious teachers to carry the matter beyond the grave, and postulate a *post mortem* probation for each child, which has passed out of this life without defining, by the free election of its own personal and individual will, its relation to Christ and his gospel.

This course is a surrender, and a confession, that the problem is insoluble in this life; but rather than abandon the issue utterly, and speak no word of any sort concerning the fate of the dead baby, in sheer desperation, the question is carried over into the unseen world, where it is *supposed* to be settled, out of sight, according to the principles and definitions of the school, which seeks to make this disposal of the matter, rather than submit to those criticisms of its philosophy necessitated by those facts, which the dead infant creates.

This hypothesis assumes, that the nature of the dead child is vitiated in consequence of its connection with the antenatal ancestry, which preceded it; and that, consequently, the infant, unregenerated and

unsanctified, is morally unfit for permanent life in the family of God; and further, that the infant, if transferred to heaven with no unchanged moral character, would, according to the history and analogies of human development on the earth, on coming to maturity in the heavenly state, reveal itself, as containing within its nature, potential germs of evil. The expurgation of its native *vitium*, and the complete eradication of all the seeds of wickedness, which may be in its heart, is held to be an indispensable necessity for its entry into glorified life, and permanent development in harmony with the sinlessness of its eternal surroundings.

But it is also a premise of the hypothesis that the infant, prior to its death, being incapable of self-grasp and self-decision, is incompetent to determine, by its own personal and conscious will, its own moral bearings towards the gospel and its propositions; and that it is illegitimate for those bearings to be determined for him in any other manner, or by any other person in all the wide universe of space and duration. A moral change must be wrought; that change must be wrought by the child's own choice, and upon his own initiative; and this choice and initiative his infantile powers render it impossible for him to make, at least, this side the grave.

An alternative is forced: (a) either the dead infant must be transplanted, unregenerated and unpurged, into the bosom of the heavenly family; (b) or it must be regenerated and sanctified without its own agency and consent by the sovereign power of its Maker; (c) or it must be brought to maturity in the intermediate state between death and the judgment, and thus be allowed to settle its own destiny by its own free agency, and upon its own responsibility. Of these suppositions, the first two are held by the adherents of this mode of reasoning to be impossible and inadmissible, and the third is left as the only

and dernier resort, for explanation of the final fate of the dead child.

To aid in the *pre mortem* determination of the final destiny of the infant, this hypothesis refuses to invoke the theory of the universal fatherhood of God, or that of his general benevolence, because whatever the relations of the child to God, and however much God may love the child, it still stands in need of a change of heart, which change can be righteously wrought only by the free and voluntary choice of the child. Neither the fatherhood, nor the love of God would avail to prevent the *vitium* in the heart of the child from breaking out in heaven in overt acts of sin, because in this life, and in connection with those infants who come to adulthood and accountability, we see that the divine fatherhood and love do not act as effective restrainers: there is nothing to indicate that they would be effective in heaven. The theory persistently emphasises the need of regeneration for the infant, and persistently asserts that no human being can be acted upon, by even divine grace, without the consent, and cooperation, of its free will.

This hypothesis also declines to concur in the theory, that the infant is so racially involved, and entangled, as to become the passive beneficiary of the union of divinity and humanity in the incarnation of Christ; for a participation in this mode would be involuntary, and therefore irresponsible, and therefore coercive, and therefore an outrage upon human freedom. No way can be devised, consistent with the principles of this school, by which any human being, infant or adult, can be saved without its coaction and coagency in the result. Such cooperation, from the nature of the case being impossible, the whole question of the salvation of the dead infant, with all his latent potentialities wrapped within him, must be referred to the disembodied state. The whole moral issue could and would have been settled

here, had the child lived; it died before the issue was capable of being settled on the earth, and it must therefore be settled in the state that lies on the other side of the grave.

Dr. Curtis, the professor of Systematic Theology in Drew Theological Seminary (Methodist), after complaining that he knew but "one American theologian who seriously tries to say a consistent word on this matter," says:

"My own conclusions as to infant salvation are as follows: First, it is a fact of Christian consciousness that we all now believe that those children are saved who die before they reach personal responsibility. Our discussion, therefore, is not for the purpose of getting a belief, but merely for consistency, merely to harmonize with the fundamental principles of our theology a belief which we already have. Second, these children are *persons*. We cannot for a moment believe the teaching, however practically couched, that these children, snatched from our homes, are nondescrips, more than *thing*, but less than *person*. There can be no such nondescript. In the intermediate state all these children come to full personal experience just as surely as our children do in this life. Third, these children are *moral* persons. Not only do they come to self-consciousness with all the motives originally intrinsic to created personality, but also they feel the urgency of these motives as persons under moral demand. Fourth, under moral demand and with this contrariety of motives, these children apprehend and freely accept their Saviour; and, in companionship with him, they achieve, in the intermediate state, the full equivalent of a perfect Christian experience. Thus they are saved under a personal and moral test, but not in a formal probation. Fifth, the reason these children are treated in this special manner, the reason for their being taken out of this life and granted an essential test in place of a formal test, is, I conjecture, this: they are exceptional persons who have no need of a prolonged probation to fix their moral destiny; and their death is so entangled with the probation, or with the development, of other persons as to

be of more providential worth than is continued life in this world. That is, they die not to get advantage but to give service. And yet they are peculiarly honored. To be selected by our Lord, to be taken at once into his profound life, to get their entire Christian salvation, so to speak, directly from him, should be regarded as a glory beyond our largest estimate in speech." - *The Christian Faith, p. 403.*

1. I charge upon this theory, first of all, that it is not a solution, but an abject surrender, of the whole question of infant salvation.

It zealously denies the salvation of an infant *as an infant;* and hypothecates a complete schedule, according to which an infant passes into the intermediate state, and in that disembodied state becomes a "grown up," and, as such, undergoes an essential test, as distinguished from the formal probation required of adults in this embodied life. This is a complete abandonment of the salvation of an infant, *as such,* and substitutes for it a scheme by which the dead baby may grow to maturity and moral discretion in the disembodied world, when, as an *adult* soul, it enters upon probation, and determines its character and destiny by the free and discretionary choices of its own mature will. But the question is not, How can an adult, either embodied or disembodied, be saved? The question is, How can an infant be saved in this life? Predicating, as this hypothesis does, that destiny is the fruitage of character; and that character is the fruitage of probation, and that the infant as such is incapable of being a probationer, a dead infant upon the hands of God becomes a somewhat, which he cannot dispose of. It cannot be sent to hell, because it is not responsible; it cannot be taken to heaven, because it has no self-made character of holiness; hence the hypothesis is under the necessity of inventing a method for the infant's continued growth after death: but this changes the question and shifts the issue, and is

tantamount to a flat denial of the possibility of the salvation of any infant as an infant.

II. I charge this theory with making a more offensive use of the divine election than does that Calvinism which it implacably opposes.

Some of the children of men God selects to live in this world, and to be put upon a "formal probation" here, handicapped, relatively, by the body and all its sensualisms, physical appetites, and those unfavorable and repugnant environments, incident to earning a livelihood at the same moment it is working out its final destiny—all of which conspire to reduce, by one-half, the chance of being successful in achieving a happy issue; while the Deity elects another class of the children of men to die, and be put upon "essential probation" in the disembodied state, to work out their destiny as spirits unencumbered and unembarrassed by a physical and sensational system—thus reducing the possibilities of falling by one-half. The chances of those children who come to moral maturity, and are put upon probation in the body, as compared with those children who come to moral maturity after death, and are put upon probation out of the body, are altogether disproportionate and unequal. Life, therefore, becomes a probationary hardship; to die, becomes a probationary advantage. And who makes these distinctions, and confers these advantages? That God who takes the one, and leaves the other. The children who die in infancy, we are told, are "exceptional persons;" "they are accepted by our Lord." We are assured that "they do not die to get advantage, but to give service." But there is distinction and difference; the advantages do accrue, whether intentional or otherwise; all are not subjected to the same or equal test. God is elective and discriminative, and by his sovereign will determines whether the moral testing is to be in the embodied or disembodied state. How

will the complaint of the man, whose sensualism and bodily appetites have been his undoing, that the results would have been different in his personal history had he been favored, as was his brother, with separation by death, even in his infancy, from a sensational system which had cloyed and encumbered his soul during all his earthly career—how will such a complaint be met? He could plead that he could never have been a drunkard, or a libertine, or a glutton, but for the body which was one hemisphere of his totality. He could plead that, under different conditions, such as those of his brother who died in infancy, his moral history would have been different. How will the theory stop every mouth, and bend every knee in acknowledgment of the righteousness of God in the day of Judgment?

III. This whole theory of a *post mortem* probation for dead infants is the veriest hypothesis- the purest piece of guess-work.

Is death a door, or a wall? Does the infant continue to live after it ceases to breathe, or does it become extinct? If it continues to live, does it preserve its individuality and identity, or is it absorbed in the ocean of the infinite as a drop of water sinks in the sea? If individuality and identity continue beyond the grave, is the soul of the infant conscious, does it continue to grow, or does it abide permanently fixed in the state in which it died? If it grows, is it put upon a moral probation, or disposed of without any farther testing? If put upon probation, what are the conditions of the trial? If successful in its trial, is the reward heaven, or something else? We can raise a thousand eschatalogical questions, but the Scriptures only can answer any one of them; and upon the question of a *post mortem* probation of dead infants they are dumb oracles. Not a proof-text can be quoted; not a verse which yields it by good and necessary consequence can be referred to. It is

the sheerest speculation, lifted bodily out of the imagination of those theologians who are hardly bestead by the bearings of some of their premises upon the case of the dead infant. As Origen, Muller, Kurtz, and others, hypothecated the preexistence of all souls, and their probation and fall in some pretemporal and antenatal state, to account for original sin, so the friends of this theory suppose a post temporal, *post mortem*, disembodied probation for those human beings who die in infancy, for the sake of the doctrine, that each person must personally decide his own destiny, by the free elections of his own will.

IV. This therory is founded upon the false assumption, that probation must, and from the nature of the case can, be only individual and personal and voluntary.

There are two modes of doing anything: (a) personally, and (b) representatively. A merchant may be his own salesman, or he may sell his goods through a clerk; a prisoner may plead his own cause, or some attorney may represent him; the head of a government may go on a mission himself, or he may send an ambassador; in any case, the actions of the agent bind the principal, and the instructions of the principal bind the subordinate. *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*, (he who does anything through another, does it himself); is a legal, political, commercial and common sense maxim. The legitimacy and beneficiency of the representative principle cannot be gainsayed by a citizen of this Republic, whose very type and genius is that of representative government.

It is indisputable that, under at least some conceivable circumstances, the representative principle is legitimate, feasible, and advisable; and consequently the wide generalization of the theory before us, that no probation could possibly be vicarious in its char-

acter, is not true as a universal and *a priori* proposition.

But it is alleged that the admissibility of the representative principle, in any application of it, is absolutely conditioned upon the free, voluntary, and intelligent consent of all the parties in interest. Then, if it is admissible in agreed instances, it is not intrinsically wrong and immoral to apply it at least under some circumstances. The only debate possible is over the conditions under which it is allowable, righteous, and expedient.

Now the particular case before us is that of a moral minor, an infant who is incompetent to act for himself, and incapable of giving his consent to any arrangement, even the very best possible, which may be proposed for him. Let us suppose one, Christ, who is supernaturally competent, and infinitely willing to take this helpless babe in his arms, assume all its obligations, gather up in his hand all the issues affecting its welfare, and to go on trial in his room and stead; this merciless theory denies the right and power of any competent and willing adult, even the Redeemer himself, to become interested in the child, and take care of him. However righteous the arrangement, however beneficial to the child, however acceptable in the eyes of God, this heartless hypothesis rises up to dissent: the baby must decide the momentous issues of eternity for himself; if he dies before he is able to act intelligently, then in the disembodied world he must find some way of issuing the matter for himself: the divine law forbids any competent and willing person, even Christ, to bear the helpless child, because the child cannot give his intelligent consent to the bearing! I wonder they do not tell us that not even his mother can give him birth without his consent, or take the helpless little one to her bosom without his intelligent and voluntary acquiescence! She would be coercing him, and

violating his free agency, if she holds him in her arms, or coddles him upon her lap, or attends to his wants. The helpless little thing must perish for time and eternity, because he cannot intelligently and voluntarily consent to the good things which are proposed in love and kindness for his welfare—unless, forsooth, his disembodied soul comes to manhood somewhere in the world beyond the grave, and in its strength rises up to take care of himself; it is unlawful for anybody to take care of him: it were laughable were it not so shocking. When he gets to be a man—before death or after death—he could say to any one who came forward in kindness: "I do not need you *now*; I am able to care for myself. You would have helped me when I could not help myself, but that was stopped by the rule of probation." But how is he ever going to come to man's estate, if it is unlawful to help him in his infant period, when he cannot give his consent?

God made Adam—without his consent. He made him a man and not a monkey—without his consent. He defined all the conditions of the trial in Eden—without his consent. He appointed his Son to be the sinner's Redeemer—without any man's consent. He sent his Spirit into the world—without the world's consent. He convicts and converts sinners—without their consent. He does a multitude of things to men, and for men, and through men—without their consent. He has never appeared as a God limited and conditioned by the consent of his creatures. How much less does he have to get the consent of the helpless baby, before he can save the little thing from eternal death—a little thing dying at eight days of age, he must get the little creature's consent before he can clasp it in his arms, and fold it to his saving bosom, and bear it aloft to heavenly felicity, life and development! This is free agency, hindering and handicapping and destroying the race. "They

shall be willing in the day of my power." "No man can come to me except the Father draw him." Not even an adult can consent to the gospel arrangement, except the Spirit persuade and enable him: and if he can, and does, quicken the soul of the adult sinner, often hardened and fixed in its iniquitous ways, it would seem to be even an easier task to quicken the spirit of the baby. If Christ bears the adult in his arms, I see not why it would not be a lighter load to carry the infant. He is the Saviour, and the Spirit's grace is the effective power in the life of the adult. I see not, therefore, why the regeneration and sanctification of the infant does not appear to be a simpler matter than the same changes in the case of the old man. The adult's consent is given only after grace has converted him: why then must the Deity wait on the dead infant until some moment in eternity, when the child may yield his consent? And if in the disembodied state the child should decline to concur in the overtures of grace, what would be the alternative, but to consign him out of the disembodied state into the place of the finally impenitent and lost? The glory of our gospel is that it saves those who cannot save themselves: adults cannot save themselves, and infants cannot save themselves: if saved at all, both classes must be subjects of God's operations upon their natures.

This whole theory is radically and fundamentally wrong in construing man, as essentially and eternally, an individual and personal probationer, until he changes the status by the decision of his own will. God has always dealt with the race upon the representative principle: men were tried and condemned in the first Adam, and they are re-tried and saved in the Second Adam.

The theory of a *post mortem* probation for infants is forced upon the acceptance of certain theologians by the broad proposition, that men are probationers

under the gospel. Such, flatly, is not the truth. The infant, neither before nor after death, ever goes into the dock upon personal probation. It was first tried in Eden, and there condemned; it is next tried on Calvary, and there justified. The issues are all over, and settled, before it ever comes of age, morally, to stand trial in and for itself.

V. But the Scriptures are perfectly explicit in teaching, that there is no *post mortem* probation for any human being, either infant or adult.

The hypothesis under examination denies that the opportunities of salvation are restricted to this life; denies that character and destiny are fixed in time for eternity; affirms that God's solicitude for the welfare of men, and his provisions for their redemption, follow them beyond the grave into the disembodied state; and teaches that for all human beings the middle state, between death and the final judgment, is a period of change and spiritual progress in sanctification.

George A. Gordon, minister of the Old South Church in Boston, in his lectures to Harvard University, states the argument for probation after death in the following language:

"It must now be said that the doctrine that confines the moral opportunity of man to this life undermines faith in the moral character of God. To say that the Creator has a supreme moral interest in human beings, that he is full of compassion for them, and offers to help them in the way of righteousness during the brief and uncertain period of their existence upon the earth, but that after death his word is one of unalterable mercilessness toward all the failures in time, and that the environment of the future is so constructed as to make the desire for ethical improvement—supposing it to exist, which is not at all unlikely—eternally ineffectual, is to destroy forever the moral idea of God. Nor are alleviations of this dismal hypothesis at all sufficient; such as the provision of a future chance for those who have had no

Christian opportunity upon earth. That makes a bad conception a trifle less incredible, but no more. It does not meet the question, What does the perfection and the immutable character of God, as Creator and Father of men, necessitate in his relation to the race? The question is not what men deserve, but what God's honor demands. The old theology which is always to be distinguished from the old religion, and emphatically from the Christian religion, was full of shuffle and sophism here. It contended for the eternal willingness of God to save; threw the blame upon the lost; and all the while knew perfectly well that the willingness of man to accept salvation is the outcome of the willingness of God to bestow it. The theory in question draws a circle, larger or smaller as the case may be, within which, at most, is gathered an insignificant minority of the human beings who have lived upon the earth, over which the sovereign purpose of God extends, but beyond which to the countless millions who exist there he is compassionless and implacable. Now this is the same thing logically as to say that one can cut out a circle in space, within which the law of gravitation operates, and where the order and beauty that always follows may be beheld; but beyond which there is no gravitation, no law of space, and where nothing exists but chaos and utter contradiction. The answer to such a wild fancy would be that space is forever the same, that gravity can be nowhere unless it is everywhere. And similarly the exposure of the illogical theory is contained in the bare statement that God is the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, who is without variableness or the shadow that is cast in turning. In all worlds God is the same, and his moral interest in men and his endeavor for them must be equal to the duration of their existence." — *Immortality and the New Theodicy, p. 76.*

The argument for a *post mortem* probation is a piece of pure speculation, born in the exigencies of certain fallacious philosophical theories about the human will, and the probationary character of all human life. It assumes that God is love, and that love is as persistent and universal as gravity. As

God has created men, his honor requires that he be perpetually interested in them, and eternally concerned about their salvation, regardless of all behavior on their part towards him. If he should ever finally abandon any portion of the human race, whatever the provocation, he would instantly become guilty of an immorality, which would bring him justly under the censure of the intelligent universe. As a Father, necessarily loving his human children, should one of them be ultimately lost, he would necessarily find himself a miserable mourner at the gates of hell. His sense of honor, his essential ethics, his yearning heart, conspire to make it impossible for God to ever put an end to a sinner's probation, except that end be finally blessed. The gates of heaven, consequently, can never be closed: they must swing open as long as there is a human being who has not entered therein. Probation chance trial – must be not only *post mortem*, but eternal. There can be no finally impenitent and incorrigible sinner: the subjective nature of God shuts him up to an "open door" policy for all eternity.

Of course there is a distinction, clearly apprehensible and actively drawn, between a *post mortem* probation for those heathen adults, who have died without any historic knowledge of the gospel; and a similar probation for those infants, whose death preceded their evolution to moral stages or accountability, and so present, in this life, illustrations of arrested development; and an eternal and never ending probation for all mankind, under whatever conditions they may have passed out of this life. One may logically hold a future probation for one of these classes, and at the same time deny it for the other two classes. But if our Scriptures teach that death fixes character, and seals destiny for all classes and conditions of mankind, so that there are no fundamental changes in personal history after death, the

idea of any *post mortem* probation for any person whatsoever is totally barred.

In fixing the colors in their fabrics so that they will not fade, the dyers use a chemical bath which they call a *mordant*. It is a biblical conception that death is the mordant of destiny. Herein is precisely the awful significance of death, and the reasonableness of that alarm with which men generally contemplate it. If one could be assured that he could take up his career, changed only in its external environment, the king of terrors would be disarmed of four-fifths of its frightfulness. Under these circumstances multitudes of this world's failures, soiled in character, and discouraged in spirit, and embittered by adversities, and in a thousand ways handicapped and rendered hopeless, would hasten, through suicide, into the unseen world, as men who have broken down in the east fly to the west in the hope of a better chance to recover and recuperate health or fortune. But the very solemnity and alarmingness of death grow out of the fact, that it is the unalterable seal of destiny. It is a period—a full stop—in all human opportunity to change character and reverse destiny.

To shut men out from the hope that anything can be altered after death, and ground an exhortation to them to make the best of the present life, the Spirit has caused it to be written: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Eccl. ix. 10). He, therefore, who chances it for the next world, makes the foolhardy venture in the face of the assurance that, "if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. ii. 3). The dead can no more alter destiny, than a dead and fallen tree can reverse its top and its stump. I see nothing here to warrant the

inference that, while this would be true of old trees, it would not be true of young saplings. The purpose of the illustration is not to teach that men are trees, but that death fixes the destiny of men, as irrevocably as the fall of the tree fixes its position on the ground. Herein is the pertinency and force of the repeated exhortation: "Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 7). Herein is the pathos of Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem, as a city which had not merely procrastinated and deferred its opportunities, but as one which had doomed itself by sinning away its day of grace: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Luke xiii. 33). For this reason our Lord's pessimistic comment upon Judas was grounded in soberness and truth: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). If somewhere in the endless cycles of eternity the betrayer of the Redeemer should repent and be received in eternal habitations, it would have been worth being born, whatever the sufferings necessary at last to obtain heaven.

According to this hypothesis, some men may be judged and rewarded for deeds done *out of* the body, while the prevailing assurance of Scripture is that all judgment is based upon the deeds done *in* the body: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. v. 10). But if a dead infant were put upon "essential probation" in the disembodied state, and judgment administered upon it according to its career and conduct in this *post mortem* state, it would be received according

to the deeds done out of the body. If now we take the stand with Christ on the day of judgment, when all mankind are assembled in the presence of the throne of his glory, we shall find him distributing the awards of destiny, exclusively according to the incarnated and earthly deeds of those who stand at his bar: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for yon from the foundation of the world: for I was ahungered, and ye gavé me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was ahungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison,

and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 31–46). Here is absolutely not one scrap of intimation, that any deeds done in the *post mortem* state will be so much as mentioned in that great and awful day, when God shall make the final assignment of men to their last state in blessedness or woe.

Instead of the Scripture encouraging the hope of an "open door" after death, our Lord has planted in the bosom of the parable of the Ten Virgins the doctrine of the "shut door": "And while they (the foolish virgins) went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. xxv. 10–12). But it is replied, the door will not be "shut" *until the bridegroom comes*, and that the bridegroom will not come until the end of the world; therefore the parable permits us to think of the door as "open" until that day, and that consequently there is hope for those children, who are born and die, prior to the Second Advent.

But, we are told, when the Saviour comes the second time, men will be marrying and giving in marriage, and consequently the earth will be full of people then as it was in the days of Noah; what will be the fate of those members of the human race who are infants, when the Bridegroom comes? For then the door will be "shut," and any disembodied probation will, for them, be of no avail. A theory, which cannot provide for the salvation of *all* dead infants, provides in fact for none.

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, when Dives sought to ameliorate his miserable condition, he was first admonished that his punishment was just and proper, "and besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke xvi. 26). The fact that there yawns between heaven and hell a gulf, great, fixed, impassable, certainly does not naturally suggest to our minds the idea that the state of the dead is probationary and mutable, but the very contrary.

When we go to the very end of Revelation, and read the last words which God has spoken to this world, we see that he has nailed these words upon the gates of the heavenly city: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. xx. 11). This sounds like a finality: it reads as if there is to be no eternal probation: it seems to say that God will not always wait on men. These words preclude and forbid the idea, that the question of destiny will be an open question, as long as there are ungodly and unsaved sinners.

If the Scriptures preclude the idea that life after death is probatory and alterable; if they teach that the door of hope is closed when life becomes extinct; it is positively unbiblical to assume a *post mortem* probation for those children who go hence in infancy. But further: if it be true that none can be saved except as the result of a free personal probation, favorably endured by the candidate, then, inasmuch as children dying in infancy cannot, *as infants*, undergo a free personal probation, this class of persons must logically be held to be non-salvable. Instead, therefore, of presuppositions about conscious probation, as the necessary prelude to any salvation,

proving a *post mortem* probation for dead infants, it reacts to prove that no infants, *as such,* can be saved either here or hereafter. It is tantamount to the doctrine that none but rational and self-determining adults can be saved. For the dead infant to be saved, it must grow to maturity in the disembodied world, and there, in the exercise of a *post mortem* adulthood, decide the issues of eternity for itself. It would then be saved, not as a *pre mortem* infant, but as a *post mortem* adult.

CHAPTER X.

The Universality of the Atonement.

There are those who admit that infants, in consequence of their racial connection with a sinful ancestry, are participators in a prenatal depravity and guilt; but over against this ancestral guilt, this class of thinkers set the *universality of Christ's atonement;* which, they think, has graciously cleaved from all infant life its hereditary obnoxiousness to the divine law, justice, and government, without, at the same time, eradicating the *vitium* of its moral nature. The reach of the sacrifice of the Redeemer is held to be as wide as the penal consequences of Adam's fall. This is the Wesleyan basing of the doctrine of the salvation of infants dying in infancy.

The Arminian and Calvinist, the Methodist and Presbyterian, are agreed in holding: (1) that all infants are, *somehow*, so connected with Adam as to be participants in his sin and fall; (2) that in consequence of this participation, all children, descending from him by ordinary generation, are putatively guilty and born under an antenatal condemnation; (3) that through and because of this ancestral history, inbred sin is a common moral quality of children, conditioning the very beginnings of their moral life,

and modifying all the developments in their moral career; (4) and that, consequently, a scheme of grace, to be efficient must provide for two things, (a) the removal of the guilt of original sin, and (b) the eradication of native depravity, and the correction of all the tendencies of inbred sin. While upon all these points there is much serious disagreement between the disciples of these two soteriologies, they are agreed upon the initial statement of facts. Each has its own distinctive theory as to *how* all children came to be involved in the fall of Adam, but they are one in holding, that, at the logical moment, when the catastrophe accurred in Eden, all the future members of the human family were brought into a state of guilt and condemnation, and that without the interposition of God all would have perished under divine displeasure. Both systems teach that the fall of Adam carried down the race to moral ruin, and made every unborn member of the human family obnoxious to the divine justice, and offensive to the divine holiness, and amenable to an eternal doom. All sinned when Adam sinned; all fell when Adam fell; all were condemned when Adam was condemned; all died when Adam died. The race was some sort of a unit in Eden, and each member was a common participator in that primal disaster. If the Calvinist explains the participation as federal and covenantal, while the Arminian construes it as natural and parental, they both concede the participation in the sin, and in its twin consequences of (a) guilt and (b) depravity.

But instantly upon the Adamic fall of the race, and as the close sequel of the pronouncement of the curse, God, according to the Wesleyan, announced the universality of atonement by his Son in the protevangelical words, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The proleptical effect of this atonement, made for all mankind indiscrimi-

nately and applied by the grace of the Spirit to every member of the human family, was the obliteration of the *guilt* of original sin, but it was not applied to the correction of the generic *corruption* of the race. The actual status of every child born into the world under natural conditions, graciously modified by the atonement, is expressed in the formula—*depravity without demerit*. In other words, every infant is held to be guiltless, but morally corrupt, at the moment of its entry into this world, and when it begins its career. Each child is born in a probationary state, handicapped, (a) not by original guilt, which has been graciously taken away by the atonement of Christ, but (b) by that original corruption of nature, which genders all those overt acts of transgression which it may commit at any period of its earthly history. While, therefore, Calvinism teaches that every infant is born both guilty and depraved, Arminianism teaches that it is born depraved but, on account of the atonement, not guilty. The problem then for an Arminian is to explain the salvation of a depraved infant dying in its infancy.

Upon this question the professor of Systematic Theology in Drew Theological Seminary (Methodist) says:

"I now remember only one Arminian theologian who seriously tries to say a consistent word concerning this difficult matter. Indeed, the usual Arminian procedure is to make the stoutest contention against Calvinism on this point, then suddenly to borrow the very pith of the Calvinistic philosophy, discussing it under some phrase as 'unconditional regeneration,' and so to *coerce the children into salvation*. Whatever failure we may have in our thinking, let us never do *that*. Never should we admit that any human being could be saved by omnipotence. Never, never should we admit that any human being will be saved by pure divine favoritism worked out in a providential plan. I say it carefully, but I say it with every atom of the manhood that I have, that if

one moral person can, anywhere, by any process whatsoever, be coerced into righteousness, then all our sense of God-Given equity demands that all men shall be saved. Could I be a necessitarian for one swift instant, I would have to be a universalist forever."—*Curtis: The Christian Faith, p. 403.*

This is frantic; it is worse—it is heartless brutality. If the infant, the idiot, the lunatic, being by nature helpless and incompetent to do anything for themselves, be taken into the omniponent arms of Almighty God, and borne into heaven and happiness, every "atom of manhood" in this theologian would rise up and protest and libel the very throne of grace; or, if grace should thus bear away to heavenly glory the helpless dead baby, but did not similarly pack on its back the full-grown and able-bodied man, every "sense of God-given equity" would be outraged!

If I carry my little infant, eight days old, in my arms, out of the burning building to a place of safety and comfort, would public manhood rise up and brickbat me for the deed? If I left the child in the house to perish, would not an outraged public mob me, and that justly? If I carried my child "coercively" out of the burning house, but declined to pack on my back some Goliath of Gath, who preferred to burn to leaving the things in which he was indulging himself, would public opinion pillory me as inequitable, unjust, discriminating, and unfair? This writer tries to speak a "serious word on this difficult matter," and announces the conclusion that the infant, *as an infant*, is insalvable; and so he invents an hypothesis of a *post mortem* probation to show that the child can grow to manhood in the eternal world, and save himself. If God does not carry Dr. Curtis to heaven, who will—himself or some other person? If he could believe for one swift moment that God could coercively *save* anybody, he would be a universalist for ever! Per

contra: If I did not believe that God could coercively save *anybody*, I would believe that nobody could be saved at all. My manhood does not protest against the coercion into heaven of an infant, doomed to die at eight days of age. If such an infant be not taken bodily in the almighty arms of grace, and carried through the gates of the grave into God's heavenly home, I cannot conceive how it is to get there at all.

But has the problem which lies at the Arminian door been correctly stated? Whether one, or two, or none, of this way of thinking has tried to speak "a serious word on this difficult matter," do these theologians hold that every infant is born guiltless but depraved; and is it their soteriological task to show how a guiltless, but depraved, infant, dying in infancy, can be carried through death to the bosom of God?

The *Seventh Article* in the Discipline of the Southern Methodist Church reads: "Original sin stands not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of every man, that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." According to this credal statement, every child is "corrupt" in nature, is "very far gone from original righteousness, and is by nature continually inclined to evil."

James Arminius: "The whole of this sin, however, is not peculiar to our first parents, but is common to the entire race and to all their posterity, who, at the time when this sin was committed, were in their loins, and who have since descended from them by the natural mode of propagation, according to the primitive benediction. For in Adam 'all have sinned' (Rom. v. 12). Wherefore, whatever punishment was brought down upon our first parents has likewise pervaded and pursues all their posterity. So that all men 'are by nature the children of wrath'

(Eph. ii. 3), obnoxious to condemnation and to temporal, as well as eternal death; they are also devoid of that original righteousness and true holiness (Rom. v. 12,18,19). With these evils they would remain oppressed forever unless they were liberated by Christ Jesus; to whom be glory for ever."—*Miley: Theology, Vol. II., p. 505.*

John Wesley also taught this doctrine of the race's participation in native guilt and damnableness through a participation in the sin of Adam: "This is undoubtedly true; therefore God does not look upon infants as innocent, but as involved in the guilt of Adam's sin; otherwise death, the punishment pronounced against that sin, could not be inflicted upon them."—*Miley: Ibid, p. 506.*

Pope, who alligns himself with High Arminians and who verges nigh to stright Semipelagianism, also construes the entire race as a partaker of the common hereditary depravity and guilt which has come down the ancestral line from our first parents: "Hereditary guilt is not expressly stated in the form of a proposition: the phrase is of later than Scriptural origin. But when St. Paul established the connection between sin and death as its comprehensive penalty that the condemnation of the first sin reigns over all mankind as in some sense one with Adam."—*Miley: Ibid, p. 109.*

Miley, one of the ablest and most skillful and scientific expositors of modern Arminianism, expresses his own views after citing from many Wesleyan authorities: "The doctrine maintained in previous citations from Arminian theologians means that the offspring of Adam, simply on account of his sin, and without any personal fault of their own, might justly be doomed to an eternal penal death. It means that, all are under this condemnation, and might justly suffer the infliction of this penal doom. 'Calvanists are now ashamed of consigning infants to the torments of hell: they begin to extend their election to them all.' Fletcher said this more than a hundred years ago. Yet Fletcher himself maintained a doctrine of original sin which means the desert of such a doom; and many Arminians in his succession have done the same. If the infliction of such a doom would deeply offend one's sensibilities, why should

not the doctrine of its just desert equally offend one's moral reason? If Calvinists are ashamed of the doctrine of infant damnation, it seems quite natural that Arminians were ashamed of the doctrine of a universal infant desert of damnation. The Arminian doctrine of universal justification in Christ, so far from disproving this sense of infant guilt, strongly affirms it. If this justification is a reality, as it is uniformly held to be, then the guilt of original sin must also be a reality. In the order of facts the guilt must precede its cancellation. In the previous citations we have seen that both are held to be realities, and the innocence of childhood is not its natural birthright, but the result of its justification from the guilt of original sin. Thus the one is set over against the other; and each is held to interpret the other. . . Thus a real justification of the race in Christ means a real condemnation and guilt of the race on account of the sin of Adam; and conversely, a real condemnation in Adam means a real justification in Christ as the cancellation of the common Adamic sin. Thus the justification which is held to cancel the common guilt of original sin means the prior reality of this guilt, with its amenability to the penal doom of sin, and that such is the natural state of all infants."—*Miley: Theology, Vol. II., pp. 519, 520.*

Richard Watson, still the most conservative and influential name among Methodist theologians, implicates all adults and infants in the guilt and fall of Adam: "Limborch and others materially departed from the tenets of Arminius in denying inward lusts and tendencies to be sinful until complied with and improved by the will. But men universally choose to ratify these tendencies; therefore they are corrupt in heart. If there be a universal depravity of will previous to the actual choice, then it inevitably follows that though infants do not commit actual sin, yet that theirs is a sinful nature. . . As to infants, they are not indeed born justified and regenerate; so that to say that original sin is taken away, as to infants, by Christ, is not the correct view of the case, for the reasons before given; but they are all born under the 'free gift,' the effects of the 'righteousness' of one, which is extended to all men; and this free gift is bestowed on them in order to justification of

life, the adjudging of the condemned to live. . . Justification in adults is connected with repentance and faith; in infants we do not know how. The Holy Spirit may be given to children. Divine and effectual influence may be exerted on them, to cure the spiritual death and corrupt tendency of their nature." —*Institutes, Vol. II., pp. 53–55, 59, 77.*

Dr. Agar Beet, an English Methodist, has recently written: "As a matter of fact, all men die. And, as we have just seen, Paul teaches that their death is the result of Adam's sin. If so, the punishment threatened in paradise to Adam may be said to have been inflicted upon all his children. In this sense, his sin was *imputed* or *reckoned* to them; not that God looked upon them as though they had committed a sin which took place long before they were born, but that he laid upon them the punishment threatened to their father in case of disobedience. This use of the word may be illustrated by Philemon 18, where Paul asks his friend to *reckon* to his account any fraud committed by Onesimus: 'I will repay it.'"—*Life in Christ, p. 29.*

Much space might be filled with citations from reputable Methodist sources, to prove that Evangelical Arminianism confessedly implicates all infants in the primal sin of Adam, and holds that they are by nature justly amenable to divine condemnation and wrath. But these are amply sufficient to show that this system admits, and teaches, that the Adamic legacy was (a) guilt, or liability to punishment, and (b) corruption, or the depravation of the heart.

But Arminians promptly relieve all infants of the *guilt* of original sin by predicating a universal justification in Christ. It is held that Christ died for all, indiscriminately and coequally; and that the effect of his death was the cancellation of original guilt, and the discharge of every member of the human family from amenability to punishment, but it did not *ipso facto* sanctify and purge any soul of its tainted disposition. From one aspect (guilt) of

original sin, the atonement freed all infants; but from the other aspect (depravity), it was only provisory of relief through the regeneration and sanctification of the Spirit, which acts of the Spirit are conditioned upon repentance and faith.

Miley puts the case in this clear way: "A common native damnableness is in itself too thoroughly Augustinian for any consistent place in the Arminian system. Hence the Arminian theologian who assumes to find such universal sinfulness in the Adamic connection of the race is sure to supplement his doctrine with the balancing or cancelling grace of a free justification in Christ. In this mode it is attempted to reconcile the doctrine of native sinfulness or demerit with the fundamental principles of Arminianism, and also to void the Calvinistic assumption that it fully concedes the ground of election and reprobation."—*Theology: Vol. II., p. 512.*

Dr. Tillett, the professor of Systematic Theology in the Vanderbilt University, puts the case for the Arminian in this way: "We thus see that gracious ability and prevenient grace are a result of Christ's atoning work. The effects of the righteousness of the Second Adam are coextensive with the sin of the first Adam. What we lose in Adam, we gain, and more than gain, in Christ. 'For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.' 'As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' That is, the benefits of Christ's righteousness and atoning death are coextensive with Adam's sin. If through the first Adam, man became a sinner, through the Second Adam he became a redeemed sinner. Christ's atonement did not remove the effects of the fall and place the race back where Adam was, in a state of moral innocence; but it provided for all the consequences of Adam's fall, and for the ultimate and entire removal of all sin." -*Personal Salvation, p. 119.*

If all that these Methodist theologians contend for be fully granted, namely, that the atonement of

Christ is so applied as to acquit of guilt, and discharge from penalty, every infant member of the human family, so that not even a shred of the original personal obligation is left, we still have on our hands, in the case of the dead infant, a *corrupt and depraved* creature, albeit the corruption is only potential, and the depravity latent and unexpressed. What is the Methodist going to do with him? They themselves being the judges, nothing unregenerated and unsanctified can go to heaven; regeneration and sanctification must, *in every case*, they still being the judges, be preconditioned by repentance and faith, for, under no circumstances, will they allow anything like "unconditional regenertion," or admit that character can be acquired in any other mode than by a probationary and voluntary test; and the infant now dead, could not, they and all men being the judges, comply with the necessary conditions. What final disposition will they make of him? He cannot be punished in hell, because he is not *guilty*; he cannot be elevated to heaven, because he is *unholy*; in their thought there is no *post mortem* probation, nor is there any *limbus infantum*.

What will they do with the dead infant? They are too intelligent and self-respecting to shut their eyes and say, God will take him to heaven *somehow*. They must point out *how* he can be saved, or confess that their system does not contain, and cannot contain, any provision for the salvation of dead babies consistent with the fundamental principles of their theology. No wonder that few of them have attempted "to say a consistent word concerning this difficult matter!"

Dr. Tillett says: "The *guilt* of original sin does not belong to man's nature as inherited; and hence infants, while their infancy lasts, or those who die in infancy, are never to be regarded as morally guilty or as liable to punishment."—*Personal Salvation, p. 84.*

But all that this means is, that they are not punishable, because they are not guilty; but the heavenly inhabitant must, not only be free from guilt, but he must also be free from corruption; and Dr. Tillett admits, that "nature as inherited" is depraved; and contends that "the inherited bias toward sin "renders regeneration necessary;" and vigorously teaches that regeneration is conditioned upon faith The infant must be regenerated; to be regenerated, it must believe; it cannot believe, therefore it cannot be regenerated; therefore it cannot be saved. The logic is inexorable.

What is the Methodist going to do with the dead infant? He cannot save him without regeneration, and the child cannot be passive in regeneration, but must actively repent and believe as an indispensible precondition. "God," we are told, "in a sense, limited himself when he created a free will." Again, we are dogmatically assured, that "moral free agency implies, and necessitates, the principle of probation in the moral government of God." Then it is laid down as an absolutely incontrovertible proposition, that the human will cannot be determined by the divine will, without outrage and destruction.

"And nothing, we may confidently affirm, is more certain in Christian doctrine than that the repentance, faith, and continual perseverance of an individual are determined by his own will, and not by the divine will. For, if it was the divine will that determined these things, then every individual would repent and believe and persevere unto the end.—*Personal Salvation, pp. 32, 40, 58.*

All these propositions will not hang together: we must give up something. (a) We must give up the doctrine of infant salvation; or (b) we must give up the doctrine of infant depravity; or (c) we must give up the doctrine that all human life is probationary; or (d) we must give up the doctrine that the

divine will cannot determine the human will in consistency with its nature; or (e) we must give up the doctrine that repentance and faith precede and condition regeneration in every instance.

But admit the Arminian contention in all its fulness; grant that the atonement of Christ had such a universal application as resulted in carrying away the guilt of original sin from the entire human family, from every person that was even remotely, or to any degree, implicated in the Adamic disaster; assume that as all died in Adam so all were made alive in Christ; what becomes of the *depravity*? That it was not removed by the atonement, Arminians admit: "depravity without demerit" is the formula, which has been coined to set forth the exact spiritual status of all mankind, infant and adult, since the fall in Adam, and the recovery in Christ. What becomes of "inbred sin," of the "tendency to evil," of the "native depravity?"

It must be eradicated from the heart of the child: else when it reaches heaven, and there grows to maturity in the heavenly environment, what is in him may, and must, come out in word and deed and behavior to his eternal undoing in that blest abode. All evangelical Arminians have no hesitancy in insisting, that every thing corrupt must be eradicated, before any human being can dwell in God's holy place.

Depravity must be eradicated from infant and adult nature: but *how*? I press the question. By acts of repentance and faith and evangelical obedience, so far as the competent adult is concerned, the Wesleyan answers: and the answer is perfectly intelligible.

But how can the evil heart be taken away from the infant? Not without its consent: that would be to outrage its free will, a thing even God cannot do, according to the Wesleyan. Then how can the

moral *vitium* be got out of the child? Not by sovereign grace, or unconditional regeneration: that is pure Calvinism, and to be Calvinistic on this point, say Dr. Summers and Dr. Wiley, would be to be logically Calvinistic at every point and forever. Then how must the *vitium* be eliminated from the heart of that baby, which dies in its infancy? Not by repentance and faith and evangelical obedience: the infant is incompetent to perform such acts. It is morally depraved: that fact is conceded. It must be sanctified: that fact is cenceded. It cannot convert itself: it is incompetent. It cannot be sanctified by unconditional regeneration: that is Calvinistic. It cannot go to heaven in its depravity: that would be to pollute the home of story.

Then what is the Wesleyan going to do with this guiltless-depraved thing? Deny the fact of the child's depravity? that would be to turn Pelagian. Eradicate it by sovereign grace? that would be to turn Calvinist. Carry the dead child over into the disembodied state, to be cleansed on the other side of the grave? that would be to surrender the case on this side of the grave, and confess their soteriology incapable of construing the case at all in the present world. What will the Wesleyan do with a guiltless-depraved dead infant? Dr. Curtis says "it is a difficult matter;" and that few Arminian writers have attempted to say a consistent and serious word on the subject. Theology cannot satisfy the rational demands of inquiring minds by blindly saying, dead infants are saved somehow: a reason from Scripture, or nature, or both, must be given.

But again let us grant the fundamental contention of the Wesleyan, namely, that the death of Christ had such bearings upon all men as to render them *salvable*. The effect of the atonement then was either to *save* all men, or to render them *salvable*. If it was so made for all members of the human

race as to *save* them, universalism is the logical and necessary result: but this Wesleyans deny. Then the atonement was made for all in such a way as to render all *salvable*. But how can this universal salvability be converted into *salvation*? The Wesleyan answers, that the voluntary acts of repentance and faith and evangelical obedienne are the translating acts, which convert *salvability* into *salvation*. But how is *infant salvability* converted into *infant salvation*? The child is incapable of performing the translating acts. If God performs the act, and converts salvability into actual salvation, unconditionally: that would be Calvinism; and if Calvinistic upon this crucial point, then logically Calvinistic everywhere. But the infant cannot convert his salvability into salvation: then if he dies in that state, all that can be predicated of the dead infant is that he died *salvable*, but not saved.

The Wesleyan contention, that the atonement of Christ only brought into being the possibilities of salvation, which must be seized upon by the free will of man, and by him converted into the fact of salvation, must be somehow modified to fit the case of a child, which died incapable of performing the alleged translating acts.

But it may be said that the atonement goes beyond mere salvability in its efficaciousness, and actually saves all for whom it was made, and it was made for the entire human family. Then, under the gospel, every child born into the world would be born into a gracious state—a child saved by the atonement of Christ. It is contended by some that the state of infancy is a *saved state*, and every infant makes his advent into this saved state, contemporaneously with his advent into this earthly life. If so, then every child, on coming to age, commits actual sin, and falls from grace. Then the present state into which human beings are born, is the saved

state; and each individual gets out of this state by apostatizing. Infants, who die in infancy, do not come to moral age, and consequently perish in the saved state, and go to heaven.

It comes then to this: every adult is a saved infant apostatized—a child "fallen from grace," on coming to adult age. Then how is the fallen adult to be again restored to the favor of God? The Wesleyan replies: By another application of the atonement; and so on, indefinitely. But the Scriptures teach that, if a man "fall from grace," it is "impossible" to renew such an one again: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. vi. 4–6). "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking forward to judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. x. 26, 27). "For if after they have escaped the polutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Pet. ii. 20,21).

These, and all other similar passages, are *hypothetical*. They do not teach that any Christians do "fall away," as a matter of fact; but "if any do fall away"—if that supposition be made—then it is true that such lapsed ones cannot be restored again to the favor of God. The broad principle underlying such

teachings seems to be, that there can be made but one application of the atonement of Christ to the same person; if that application were ineffective in any instance, it cannot be made the second time. The "foolish virgins" which let their lamps go out, never got them lighted again. The "fruitless branch," supposed to be cut off, is never reunited to the vine again, but is cast into the fire and burned up. One application of the atonement of Christ to the individual: if that proves ineffective, there remains not another Saviour to atone for him—there is not another Son in the bosom of the Father to die for him. The apostate—if there were one—must bear the consequences of his fall; his loss is assured.

But the Wesleyan teaches us that the atonement was first applied universally to all men in their infant state, and brought them into a redeemed state; and that each adult lapses into wickedness on coming to the years of moral accountability; and then each of these adults is salvable a second, a third, an indefinite number of times by repeated applications of the same atonement of Christ.

It is a curious fact that every infant, justified and saved by the atonement, should, on coming to its moral majority, fall away, and need reclamation by the atonement. Some persistently operating cause ought to be discovered for this uniform and persistent effect. It looks as if every infant comes of age, with something in his nature, which leads him to invariably express himself in acts of overt transgression. What is this subjective and steady cause of apostacy?

Then if this be a sound resolution of the matter, is not the atonement of Christ applied, in the first instance, to infants without their consent or free agency? It is a tenet of this soteriology, that "God limited himself when he created a free will," and

that he cannot "unconditionally" apply salvation to any person without his free consent. Then, if it be applied to all infants, before or at birth, the truth would be that God first applies the atonement to all persons without their free consent; and in so doing begins the child's career with an outrage upon his very nature. But if it can be applied without the infant's consent, and without wronging his free nature, it comes back to the position that, so far at least as infants are concerned, the atonement is "unconditionally" applied to them. But we are told that if there could be one instance of "unconditional" salvation, there might be any number of such instances, and the essence of Calvinism would be conceded.

But the atonement is not a mere provisory transaction: it does more than create the possibility of salvation: it actually saves all its beneficiaries. The Redeemer came into the world, not to create a problem, but to offer a solution—not to make human beings salvable, but to actually save them. It is strictly and rigorously true to say that Christ *saves* sinners: he does not render them salvable, by putting the opportunity of saving themselves in their way. He sacrified himself in the room and stead of the beneficiaries of his cross. Then if all infants were the objects of that saving sacrifice, they are actually saved, and not rendered merely salvable.

The Arminian soteriology is at fault upon this point, because it misconstrues the nature of the atonement: it is a true, *bona fide*, sacrificial, vicarious satisfaction, which, terminating upon sin, actually expiates it; and, terminating upon God, actually placates him. But to save is to impart "eternal life;" and if all infants are saved, to all infants are given "eternal life;" and if the life imparted is "eternal," it cannot end on the moral minor coming of age.

If, therefore, the atonement was unconditionally applied to all infants indiscriminately, whether they die in their infancy or live to come to the period of their moral majority, then universalism must be the logical result; else the life granted to them in the atonement is not "eternal life," but some other temporary form of life.

The Arminian holds:

That all infants fell when Adam fell;
That all infants were saved when Christ died;
That all infants fall when they become adults;
That all infants are saved when they die.

This theory of infant salvation is tenable only upon these suppositions: (1) that the atonement of Christ was "unconditionally" applied to all the children who fell in Adam, in such a manner as to free them, "unconditionally," from both the guilt and the depravity—the *damnum* and the *macula*—of sin; (2) that each adult, on coming to moral maturity, "falls from grace"—falls from a state in salvation to a state in condemnation—by the overt acts of his free will; (3) that each apostate is renewable to a state in grace by the penitent acts of his will; (4) that infants, dying in infancy, are salvable because they die in the *saved state*, prior to the time of adolescence, and the second general fall of mankind.

Calvinism, on the other hand, makes an "unconditional" application of the atonement of Christ, not to all infants, but to those infants which die in infancy; and the effect of this "unconditional" application is the removal of the guilt of original sin. But it goes a step further, and holds that there is also an "unconditional" application to these infants of the grace of the Holy Spirit: the effect of which is the regeneration and sanctification of the dead children—the expurgation of the *macula* of sin. There is nothing inconsistent in the Calvinist asserting the doctrine of "unconditionality," because it is

central in his system, as he teaches that all the benefits of redemption are applied, alike to infants and adults, "unconditionally."

But if an Arminian could hold the "unconditional" application of redemption at one point, and in respect to one person, he could logically hold to the sovereignty of God all the time and everywhere. "I say it carefully," writes Dr. Curtis, "but I say it with every atom of manhood that I have, that if one moral person can, anywhere, by any process whatsoever, be coerced into righteousness, then all our sense of God-given equity demands that all men shall be saved." This is logical. Could there be, in equity and righteousness, an "unconditional" application of the atonement, then there could logically be an "unconditional" application of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification: but this is Calvinism.

Arminianism, then starts correctly, in its effort to account for the salvation of a dead infant, in postulating the "unconditional" application to him of the benefits of Christ's atonement; but it stops short, when it fails to make to him a parallel "unconditional" application of the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit. Then it goes too far, in making an "unconditional" application of the atonement to *all* infants, instead of stopping with those who die in infancy. Then it overreaches itself, when it denies that there can be an "unconditional" application of the Spirit's grace to *any person.*

The Arminian theory of infant salvation may be run out to an absurdity in this manner: All infants fell when Adam fell; all infants became guilty and depraved when they fell; all infants were delivered from the guilt of sin, when Christ died; no infant is delivered from the depravity of sin, or "inbred sin," except by the regeneration and sanctification of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit never regenerates and sancti-

fies except upon condition of faith and repentance; but no infant, as such, can repent and believe, therefore no infant is salvable, because it cannot give its consent to its being "born again." No wonder Dr. Curtis says that the matter has to be relegated to the disembodied world, in which a virtual probation may be hypothecated! The problem is too hard for this life. And as long as the Arminian persists in denying the absolute "unconditionality" of the application of all the benefits of salvation, and states his question in this absurd way, How can the infant's consent to be born again be obtained prior to his being born? it will probably be a question too hard for the life which is to come.

CHAPTER XI.

Baptismal Regeneration.

Of all the mooted questions in theological controversy this is one of those most fiercely litigated; and, more than anything else, has hindered the Church from seeing truly, and making such a statement of doctrine on the subject of infant salvation, as would at once satisfy Christian reason in its legitimate demands, and rejoice the pious heart in its deepest sentiments. It strikes its roots far back into the past; and for historic ages it has been drawing sap and strength from that sacramentarianism, which caused the apostacy of the Dark Ages on the one hand, and the rebound of the Reformation on the other; and so thoroughly did it permeate Christian conception, and color credal statements, and mould ecclesiastical life, that the Protestant mind, to this day, does not appear to be completely emancipated from its baleful influence. As in the days of old, it converted all doctrine into dead formulas, all worship into lifeless ritual and milinary, and all Christian experience into pulseless formalism; so, because of the remains of its leavenous traces in the Church of today, it is to be dreaded more than any other danger, which casts a frightening shadow across our Protestanism.

After we have finished the experiment with rationalism, and wearied of all its prosaic criticisms; and after we have floundered among the intangible vagaries of mysticism until we are tired unto death with fog-banks and dreams; it will be due to the great mercy of God, if we do not swing back to ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism, and sacramentarianism, in the hope of finding rest for mind and heart. If we do, history will repeat itself: it will be but the rest of the corpse in the grave, however gorgeous the shroud, and splendid the funeral, and grand the cathedraled mausoleum and spectral the mitered priesthood, that fumbles and mumbles about the bier. The world has once seen the gospel entombed with all the pomp and pageantry the mediæval imagination could invent: may we never see such another burial!

The natural opposition of the human heart to the principles and schedules of the divine procedure in the salvation of sinners, the natural tendency to construe the scheme of redemption in such a manner as will reflect credit upon mankind, rather than in a mode humbling to human pride and religious conceit, has appeared in two historical forms: (a) in a tendency to rely upon what men are, have done, or can do; and (b) in a tendency to rely upon the intervention of other men in the administration of outward and sensible ordinances. In other words, one is the tendency to get the blessings of religion for ourselves, and the other is the tendency to get these blessings through priestly intermediaries. If the one method were successful, it would minister to our spirit of self-dependence and vaingloriousness, in that it would give us some ground upon which to stand and claim benefits from the hands of our Maker; and the other method, if successful, would give us a human being whom we might influence, and visible ordinances which we could apprehend by sense percep-

tion, which would relieve us of the necessity of walking by faith, and permit us to live by sight.

The Saducees in apostolic days, and Pelagians, Socinians, and Rationalists of later times, illustrate the former tendency in different degrees of grossness or plausibility; and the Pharisees of our Lord's day, and the Romanists and High Churchmen of these times, exemplify, with one degree of emphasis or another, the other of these tendencies. The trend of both is away from a simple and sound evangelicalism, which bottoms upon the proposition, that whatsoever is not commanded in the Scriptures, either explicitly or by good and necessary consequence, is forbidden to be prescribed as a dogma for faith on the one hand, or as a precept for worship and discipline on the other.

The leading features of Sacramentarianism, as held and inculcated in its full-fledged form by Romanists, are these: God has deposited all saving grace in the sacraments of the Church, so that, as we can say of the Son of God, that he was incarnated in Jesus Christ, we can say, in a parallel way, of the grace of the Spirit, that, it is *ensacramented* in these ecclesiastical ordinances; through the sacraments of the Church all true righteousness begins, and by them alone is it increased, and, in case of fall, repaired; these sacramental ordinances are thus indispensable to the salvation of any human being, and do actually confer saving grace, *ex opere operato*, unless some effective obstacle is interposed by the recipient or the administrator; and the Church is the legal, official, and divinely appointed custodian of these sacraments, and they can lawfully and effectively be made, and administered, only by the ecclesiastical priesthood, or by such other persons as may be authorized by the hierarchy. These ordinances, when properly administered and properly received, are held to communicate grace *ex opere*

operato, that is, by virtue of their being administered. Fire burns wood, heat smelts the ore, *ex opere operato.*

With respect to the forgiveness of sins, and the initiation of a Christian state, the Church of Rome teaches that baptism is the sacrament of regeneration—that all sins, preceding its application, are washed away by the grace which is subjective to this baptismal ordinance—that no infant, or adult, is salvable without baptism. The essential idea of this Popish doctrine is this: that there is some invariable connection, established by God, between this sacrament of baptism, and the spiritual blessing signified by it; so that whoever gets the outward ordinance, under proper conditions, *ipso facto,* gets all the religious benefits signified by regeneration, and it is a necessary corollary from this position, that whoever fails to be baptized, whatever the reason for the failure, and whosever the fault, is thereby shut out from the saving blessings of redemption.

It is an integral factor in this sacramentarian scheme, that all men fell in Adam, and have somehow heired from him a vitiated nature, so that all, infants included, need regeneration in order to their admission to heavenly blessedness. It is a tenet of this party, strenuously contended for, that there is some disorganizing, disuniting, disturbing, vitiating principle in every soul of mankind, which must be radically corrected. In short: original sin, at least as native depravity, is not denied, but affirmed, by sacramentarians.

These being the premises, there is, and logically and confessedly there can be, but one inference therefrom; namely, that any infant, dying *unbaptized,* whatever else may be done with it, cannot be admitted to heavenly blessedness. Some distinction in final destiny is made, and must be made, between the baptized and the unbaptized, else where were the

need and the necessity of any baptism at all? What, then, will the Roman Church and sacramentarians do with the unbaptized infant, who dies in an unbaptized state?

The principles of the Papal theology constrain the Church to make some provision for all those, who depart this life unbaptized. Those who were capable adults, but for one reason or another declined baptism, have thereby sealed their doom, and their ultimate destiny is and must be *hell*. But for four thousand years before Christ—before the saving ordinance of baptism was instituted—there was a countless multitude of intelligent and mentally balanced men and women who entered life and passed out through the gates of death, who, from the very fact that their whole history antedated the institution of baptism, could not have been the objects of this, the only possible saving ordinance—what must become of these? To consign them to hell for not submitting to what God had made impossible, in their case, would be manifestly unfair, as well as inconsistent with other principles of Romish theology; but the Church is equal to this exigency, and for these persons provides, in the unseen world, a *limbus patrum*, which is neither heaven nor hell, but some midway waiting place, where they must abide, until released to heaven by a baptism in the disembodied state.

Then there are the unbaptized infants who die in infancy; what shall be done with these? They cannot be sent to a penal hell, because they are not guilty; and they cannot be taken to heaven, because they are depraved; so the Church sets apart another compartment in the unseen world for their accommodation, and calls it the *limbus infantum*.

Limbus is a Latin word for *border*. The Romish eschatology requires us to think of the chorography of the unseen world as a series of concentric circles,

with constantly elongating radii, and shading from a black centre to an absolutely luminous outer zone. The centre is *hell;* the next surrounding zone is the *limbus patrum;* the next surrounding zone is the *limbus infantum;* the next surrounding zone is *purgatory;* and the last surrounding zone of perfect brightness and unmodified blissfulness is *heaven.* Happiness in the outer circles shades to absolute misery in the centre; on reversing the point of view, and looking from the centre to the circumference, the miseries of hell diminish by gradations to the felicities of heaven.

Men's relation to the sacraments of the Church—we are told—define their geographical position after death in the eternal world. The responsibly unbaptized go to the centre; the irresponsible adult, unbaptized, goes to the zone immediately surrounding the centre; the irresponsible infant, unbaptized, goes to the second out from the centre; the imperfectly baptized go to the third zone called purgatory; and those baptized and perfected by the other sacraments of the Church go to the outer or heavenly zone.

It is indisputably certain that a system of salvation, which is driven to the necessity of creating imaginary compartments in the unseen world for the accommodation of the human race, for whom it cannot otherwise make provision, must have started off on the wrong foot, to have had such an utter unbiblical and fanciful landing. Yet the doctrine of baptismal regeneration has had, what approximates an infatuation, for a large part of the ecclesiastical mind, so that expositors of this way of thinking have been balked by no consequences, either doctrinal or practical, however repulsive to sound sense, and offensive to Christian sentiment, and contradictory of fundamental principles of the gospel.

It is hard to realize how abjectly enthralled, at the time of the Reformation, was the entire religious

mind of the world by the vicious doctrine, that the sacraments were the divinely appointed organs of salvation. Taught with the dogmatism of an imperial authority; intrenched in a hoary and venerable traditionalism, which made it the very quintessence of orthodoxy; enforced upon faith with the penal sanctions of an endless hell; all theology had become warped, and ingeniously twisted into premises for its support. To dislodge it, the assumed foundations of faith had to be dug up, reshaped and relaid by the Reformers.

In endeavoring to extricate the very fundamentals of the gospel from all the rubbish with which they had been overlaid, and emancipate the human conscience from ecclesiastical tyranny and degradation, it is not surprising that Luther and Calvin found themselves with a task, too consuming and burdensome, to permit of their undertaking to clear the entire vast field of religious truth. Nor is it a matter of wonder that they did not free their own minds of every vestige and trace of sacramentarianism, so that they could state the doctrine of infant salvation in a clear and consistent manner. They did a vast deal: they could not do everything: the circumstances were too oppressive. Sometimes Calvin had glimpses of the truth on this topic, but he was kept too busy defending the very fundamentals of evangelical religion, to take the time and thought necessary to carry out his principles to a logical conclusion, as to the mode in which dead infants are to be saved. Then we must bear in mind, that he was born and reared and steeped in sacramentarianism, and it is next to impossible for any man to divorce himself absolutely from the ideas, which he drank in with his mother's milk. This is a palliation, but not a justification, of the great Genevan's failure to clear this subject along with others. He did vigorously deny regeneration by baptism, and counter- that

wretched heresy: but he did not give us a complete, and satisfactory, statement of the theology of infant salvation.

The Reformers since the Reformation are more blameworthy for the condition of doctrinal theology on this subject; but here again there are ameliorations, for the creed-makers were preoccupied with the definition, and conservation, of the fundamental principles of Protestant doctrine, which had been won at such cost and strife, and with their enlargement; and, besides, the mind of Christendom was not then, and it is not now, free from the baleful influence of sacramentarianism. Baptismal regeneration is, today, widely held as an avowed tenet of faith, and operates as a subconscious influence upon many who do not confess it. Lutherans and Campbellites cherish it as a precious article of the Christian faith, whose denial involves the denial of the gospel itself.

Bishop Martensen (Lutheran) says: "As we maintain this, the deepest meaning of the term, we say that baptism is not merely the pledge, not merely the promise and declaration of God's grace, but the bath of regeneration (Titus iii. 5), which involves not indeed personal, but substantial and essential regeneration. Baptism is, in fact, the beginning of the Christian life, and it must accordingly be, to use the apostle's word, the true bath of regeneration, *loutron paliggenesias*, for the final aim of the development must be included in every true beginning. But the aim of the new creation in Christianity is the new man, which shall not be perfectly manifested until the new earth and the new heavens are completed, when the body as well as the spirit shall celebrate its resurrection, and spirit and glorified nature shall be dissolved or blended together" (II Pet. iii. 10).—*Dogmatics, p. 425.*

Samuel Buel, professor of Systematic Theology in the Protestant Episcopal Seminary in New York, states and argues the tenet of baptismal regenera-

tion: "Baptism is, without question, the fundamental sacrament of the religion of Christ. It is the sacrament that is constitutive of the Church of Christ upon earth. . . Our Lord declared, in the plainest terms, the necessity of baptism in order to entrance into the kingdom of God, which He came to establish upon earth. He first solemnly declared to Nicodemus: 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' . . Here the initiatory of Christianity is plainly designated, and its necessity plainly declared. The regenerating power is the Spirit; the application of water, according to Christ's command and appointment, is the means and occasion upon which the Spirit acts in His regenerating grace; and therefore Christian regeneration is a birth of water and spirit. . . The sacrament of baptism ordained by Christ is the sacrament of our regeneration to be the sons of God in Christ. The words of our Lord concerning birth of water and the Spirit have been uniformly understood in all ages of the Church of the baptism which Christ ordained."—*Dogmatic Theology, Vol. I., pp. 462–466.*

If these general premises be true; if the sacraments are the depositories of grace, and the organs of salvation; if these institutions have been committed to the Church, as the only implements, by which the redemptive merits of the atonement of Christ can be effectively applied to any human being; if the sacraments in general, and baptism in particular, be thus essential to the salvation of any and every sinner, whether adult or infant, whether sane or idiot; the logic was never invented, which can square the doctrine of the salvation of an unbaptized dead infant with these fundamental postulates. Rome is thoroughly consistent, even logically necessitated, in inventing a destiny for this class of persons. Grant the premises—as the great Augustine did—and, like him, we must have the courage to accept the conclusion, that *unbaptized* infants, dying in infancy, are lost. But modern Augustinianism and Calvinism,

having purged themselves of sacramentarianism, have also purged themselves of the offensive conclusions deduced therefrom. Every detail of Augustine's teaching, and every inconsistency of John Calvin, have not been incorporated in the systems known as Augustinianism and Calvinism. He is ignorant, or deeply prejudiced, who pursues so extravagant a course of interpretation.

In the theology of the Reformers, as expressed in their creeds, and expounded by their standard writers, the sacraments are held to be signs and seals of the covenant of grace—as signs, representing Christ and the benefits of redemption in symbolic mode; as seals, officially stamping a federal transaction, in which Christ and the believer exchange promises and vows; and as means of grace, instrumentally applying religion to the life and experience of the worthy recipient, in a mode not one whit different from that, in which the preaching of the word is made efficacious. As signs, they presuppose a "spiritual discernment"—a faculty of perception and appreciation—to which their sysbolism is addressed; as seals, they presuppose a covenant already made and agreed to, as the document to which they are affixed as official authentications; as means of grace, they presuppose a state in grace of which these sacraments are but a part of the general cultural instrumentalities.

The gospel comes to the world in two forms—in word and symbol. These are not two gospels, but one and the same scheme of grace—the gospel *verbalized*, and the gospel *symbolized*. The saving power is deposited in neither form: neither the preached word nor the sacramental word converts: the Spirit of God converts, regenerates, sanctifies, glorifies. The sacraments are, like the word, but a means of grace; and behind every means there must be power; and behind these means is the specific

power of the sovereign and personal Spirit. There is no system of gearing—no bands nor pulleys—no machinery of any kind—sacramental or homiletic or ecclesiastical or otherwise—by which this personal Spirit can be harnessed, and be made to work the salvation of any human being. The Westminster Catechism clearly states the Reformer's view on this topic: "The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them, that by faith receive them." The symbolic gospel—the sacraments—becomes effective in the same mode in which the spoken gospel—preaching—becomes effective: (a) by the blessing of Christ, and (b) by the working of the Spirit in those who partake of them by faith.

While, therefore, the general Protestant mind appraises, at a high figure, the value of the sacraments, as a gracious means, for completing the furniture of a Christian character, and as a true discipline for cultivating the graces of Christian life in those who are able to partake of them in intelligent faith, it is not embarrassed by the implications and inferentials of those sacramentarian premises, which interpret these symbols as the very organs of the commencement, and perfecting, of a sound Christian experience. Having disengaged itself from all presuppositions, as to the inherent saving nature of these healing ordinances, Protestantism has been logically delivered from the incubus of baptismal regeneration, except as it may be inconsistently lugged in by some fumbling expositor to whom the smell of the old heresy clings.

But it is asserted by all sacerdotalists, in a most cocksure and dogmatic manner, that it can be shown from the Scriptures that regeneration and justification are so connected with baptism that those who

receiye baptism obtain these saving blessings, while those who are not baptized are not participators in these fundamental graces. Whether baptism, strictly speaking, be the cause of regeneration, we are assured, it so connects and entangles its subject with the covenant of salvation, as to result in the salvation of the baptized, and, at least, probably, the loss of the unbaptized.

The pious motive of this position, and of the stress laid upon it, is a jealous desire to magnify an institution, which Christ has indisputably ordained for his house, and protect it against discredit and neglect. But no amount of pious zeal can sanctify a heresy, which being logically applied, excludes a countless number of infants from the very possibility of being redeemed. A thousand times better that this ordinance fall into absolute desuetude, than that it be saved by an exaggeration, which results in the loss of unbaptized babies. To save a sacrament at such a price, would be to destroy life, in order to magnify one of the helpful instrumentalities of life; but in this instance, as in no other, it is not necessary to misinterpret the ordinance in order to preserve it. It is error that kills: it is truth that makes alive. Nothing was ever really gained by perverting the Scriptures, however pious the perversion.

Let us examine some of the leading passages relied upon, and see whether a fair construction of them yields the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

1. The passage, relied upon perhaps with most dogmatic assurance, is that saying of our Lord to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The debate here hinges upon the significance of the word "water." I find the commentators ranging themselves in these groups: (a) those who think reference is had to the baptism of *John;* (b) those who think reference is had to the *sacrament* of bap-

tism; (c) those who think reference is had to *symbolic* water. With which interpretation shall we align ourselves, and why?

(1) Does our Lord say to this ruler of the Jews, and through him to all mankind, "Except a man be baptized with John's baptism, and also be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" I think not, for these good reasons: (a) because there is another exegesis, which fits more harmoniously and smoothly into the general biblical teaching, as it does also with the immediate reasoning of our Lord; (b) because the baptism of John was not a permanent ordinance of the Christian religion, to be applied to all subsequent converts; (c) because the baptism of John was "unto repentance," and infants and idiots are incapable of repenting, while they were yet subjects of baptism; (d) because it is incongruous to couple the baptism of John, and the regeneration of the Spirit, as coordinate essentials of any man's entry into the kingdom of God; (e) because the emphasis is not elsewhere thrown upon John's baptism, with sufficient distinctness, to warrant the conclusion that any man, to the end of time, who enters heaven must have antecedently received this Johannic baptism; (f) because there is no evidence that Christ came to perpetuate the baptism of John, as an indispensable condition of salvation; and (g) we do not find the Apostles practicing John's baptism, but rebaptizing the disciples of John.

(2) The view is widely held that this reference is made by our Lord to the sacrament of baptism, so that it is explained that the Saviour said to Nicodemus: "Except a man receive the sacrament of Christian baptism, and be regenerated by the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But against this interpretation: (a) at the moment of the conversation with this inquirer, the sacrament of Christian baptism had not yet been instituted, and

consequently the statement could possibly have had no meaning whatever to Nicodemus; (b) because there is no reference whatever in the conversation with the Jewish ruler to any sort of baptism, and the introduction of the idea into the context is a clear case of reading into the narrative. The Redeemer did not say, "Except a man be *baptized* with water, (either Johannic or Christic), and be regenerated by the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He said not a thing about *baptism;* he said something about being "born": "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." The question then is not at all, Can one be saved without *baptism* of water? but this, Can one be saved without being *born* of water? The sacramentarian is guilty of changing the words in the Lord's mouth. He did not say, Ye must be "baptized" with water: but he did say, Ye must be "born" of water. There is no warrant in this context for construing "baptize" and "born" as synonyms. The thing here to be explained is *regeneration by water*, not the other thing, *baptism by water*. The word "baptize" does not occur in the entire conversation; and to put it into the thought of Christ, as prophetic or otherwise, is to take an unwarranted liberty with his mind.

(3) "Water" may be used either in a literal or in a figurative sense: it may be a physical element in a ritual, or it may be a mere emblem itself of something spiritual. In the baptisms performed by John, and in the sacrament instituted by Christ, literal water was employed in the ritual to signify the purifying agency, lying under, and giving meaning and efficacy to, the ceremony: that antitypical agency, of which the ritual water was the type, was nothing else, by universal consent, but the power of the Holy Spirit. What is simpler, what is more common, than for the reality to be designated by the symbol? The reality is the Spirit; the figure of speech for the

Spirit is "water." Then our Lord said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water, (the symbolic Spirit), and of the Spirit, (the real and personal Spirit), he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." This was the interpretation of Calvin.

In its favor: (a) there is no mention of baptism of any sort—Johannic or Christic—in all the context of that conversation, and it is absolutely gratuitous to put baptism in our Lord's mouth; (b) that which our Lord was emphasizing, and driving home, upon the mind of this formalistic Jew, intelligent but steeped in ritualism, was the deep and indispensable need of his being born again—of his being regenerated by the Spirit of God. He repeats the idea several times: he meets all the ruler's objections to the sheer impossibility of a second birth, by emphasizing the fact, that he is speaking of a *spiritual birth*—such a radical purification as is symbolized by water, such a radical change of heart as can be accomplished only by the Holy Spirit. The fundamental importance of the new birth, coupled with the obtuseness of this intelligent formalist, lead our Lord to get stronger and stronger in his statement, until he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." He simply employs the common figure of repetition, hendyadys, used for the purpose of gaining emphasis by "expressing an idea by two nouns, instead of by a noun and a limiting adjective or genitive." Had the Redeemer said, in this connection, "water" only, he would have been speaking figuratively only; had he said "Spirit" only, he would have been speaking literally only; but when he says both "water" and "Spirit," he emphasizes the matter upon the mind of Nicodemus both figuratively and literally, that he must be born again. The slowness of Nicodemus to receive the idea, the difficulties which his mind impulsively suggested, justify the reduplication of the last form of assertion, that he must be born both

of "water" and of the "Spirit." (c) All the elements of salvation are collected together under two symbols—Blood and Water. The one—Blood—is an emblem for all the objective facts of redemption; under the other—Water—are collected all the facts of subjective Christian experience. Over against the guilt of sin (objective), the Scriptures set Christ and the atonement: over against the pollution of sin (subjective), the Scriptures set the Spirit and regeneration, as it expands into the broad work of sanctification. Throughout the whole Old Testament Scriptures, the Jews had the typical *blood* of forgiveness, and the typical *water* of purification: indeed the ritual provided, *in extenso*, and fundamentally, for the *sprinkling of blood* and the *sprinkling of water* Our Lord's reference, therefore, to the "water," in his last effort to explain to Nicodemus what he meant, when he said that a man must be born of the Spirit, could hardly have been wholly unintelligible to a "ruler of the Jews," who must be held to have had some degree of familiarity with the ritual of his religion. If, therefore, we would grasp closely together in consciousness, that our Lord never once, in all the conversation, used the word baptism; that the promptness, the stubborness, the obtuseness with which the Jewish ruler challenged the very rationality of the central doctrine of the great Teacher, drove him on to iteration and reiteration of his pronouncement; that "water" was a familiar element in the ritual with which his conversationalist was acquainted, as the common figure of religious purgation; there will be left no crevice in the mind of the student, through which the notion of baptism, as connected with this saying of Christ, can come. He would be making himself utterly unintelligible to Nicodemus, if he were discoursing to him about a sacrament, which had not yet been instituted, and of which his pupil had never

heard. Nothing but a mind prepossessed with sacramentarian conceptions can see any reference to baptism in the text.

2. Sacramentarians depend most confidently, in the next place, upon the terms of that great commission, which Christ hung around the neck of his Church, as he was about to make his ascension into heaven. All four of the evangelists make some reference to these important gospel instructions, which must be of perennial interest to his devoted disciples throughout all time.

John, the beloved disciple and intimate friend of his Master, confines himself almost entirely to those supreme instructions, which were given around the table of the last supper, embraced in four chapters of his gospel, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth; but in this relatively long synopsis of our Lord's farewell discourse, not a syllable was spoken concerning baptism. This omission is incredible, on the supposition that baptism was the central doctrine of his gospel, and baptizing was to be the chief business of those whom he was charging to establish his cause and church in the world. This choice evangelist, so profound and devout in all the presentation of the teachings of his Lord, must be held to be guilty of leaving out of his story the very heart, and essence of the whole matter, if baptism were, in his mind, the most effective feature of all that scheme, which had been entrusted to him by the Redeemer he adored.

Luke, "the beloved physician," accustomed to use medicines and other material things for the relief of men, reported many things which occurred after our Lord's death, but he is absolutely silent upon the subject of baptism, an omission particularly hard to explain, in his case, upon the theory that the ritual use of water was the main instrumentality for saving sinners. "Then opened he their understanding, that

they might understand the Scriptures, and he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 45–49). This is the report by this evangelist of our Lord's last words; they emphasize the atonement and the Spirit as the things to be understood, appreciated and preached, but they contain not a shred of reference to baptism.

Matthew puts these last words of our Lord in this language: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18,20). Here there is a reduplicated emphasis upon "teaching," and his hearers are instructed to administer the ordinance of baptism to their disciples, but there is not so much as a hint of baptismal regeneration. On the contrary the natural presupposition is, that they were to be baptized because they were disciples, and not the converse idea, that they were made disciples by baptism. Discipleship is precedent, and baptism is consequent.

Mark reports our Lord in these words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Here we are told that, as in the conversation with Nicodemus, baptism and regeneration were so connected that he who received the one

received the other; so, in this original bill of instructions which Christ gave his Church when he sent it into the world, baptism and salvation were so joined together, that the former was essential to the latter: whatever the fate of the unbaptized, the destiny of the baptized must be heaven, provided, of course, they do not interpose obstacles, which defeat the very purpose of the ordinance.

In reply: (a) The word "believeth" precedes the word "baptize;" and so implicates the doctrine, that faith must precede and condition baptism, instead of baptism, as sacramentarians teach, preceding faith. That is, faith is causative and baptism is consequential; and this order can not be truly reversed. (b) Then it is not said that he who is not baptized shall be damned, but he that "believeth not" shall be damned. If baptism were causative of salvation, then non-baptism ought to be causative of damnation; and if unbelief be causative of damnation, then belief ought to be causative of salvation. Which, in our Lord's doctrine, is the indispensable condition of salvation? Is it faith *plus* baptism? Then what would be the fate of a man who had faith *minus* baptism? Or unbelief *plus* baptism? The sacramentarians dare not answer. "In the case of a baptism *without* faith, therefore, the necessary subjective *causa salutis*, 'ground of salvation,' would be wanting."—(*Meyer.*) In a case of faith *without* baptism, therefore, the necessary *causa salutis*, instrumental cause of salvation, would be present and operative, albeit the ritual of baptism would be absent. This construction of the passage shows baptism to be a ceremonial *consequent*, and not a sacramental *cause*, of saving grace.

3. There are two passages in the Acts of the Apostles, which are very earnestly relied upon by sacramentarians as proof-texts for baptismal regeneration. On the day of Pentecost Peter directed the

multitude, which inquired the way of salvation: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). The other passage is Paul's account of what Ananias said to him in Damascus: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xxii. 16). Do these passages fairly teach, (a) that baptism is the sacramental *cause*, or (b) that it is the sacramental *sign*, of the remission of sins? In the first instance, the narrative clearly shows that the Spirit had descended upon the Jerusalem multitude; that they had been "pricked in their hearts;" that they had "repented;" all prior to the mentioning of baptism; so that it is clear that their course in grace was not inaugurated by their baptism. In the case of Paul, he had had that remarkable experience on the way to Damascus, and cannot be held to have been an unconverted man, when he appeared in the house of Ananias; and baptism, therefore, cannot be held to have begun his Christian experience. In the light of these facts, connected with other Scriptures which throw all the emphasis on faith and repentance, we are obliged to hold that baptism was a sacramental *sign* of the remission of sin, and not the sacramental *cause* of the washing away of guilt and depravity.

A little later Philip baptized certain persons in Samaria, among them Simon Magus, who "believed" and was "baptized." Subsequently Peter and John were sent to Samaria, and found that, "as yet the Holy Ghost had fallen on none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and Peter particularly told Simon Magus that he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts vii. 16–23). Now upon the theory that baptism *ipso facto* remits sin, these Samaritans, having been baptized, could not have been in the spiritual condition

described by Peter and John. The incident must reflect back to the day of Pentecost, and throw light upon the instructions Peter gave inquirers on that notable day.

4. There is a group of utterances made by Paul, which are interpreted as strong supports of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (I Tim. iii. 4–7). The laver of regeneration in this text is a clear recognition, we are told, of baptism as the means, by which the Holy Spirit is given to the disciples of Christ for their salvation. Then to this add those other words: "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleans it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 25). Here, it is said, the cleansing and sanctifying grace of the word is given, and communicated, by the washing with water in the ordinance of baptism. In both places the word "washing" is the moot word. Is it (a) baptismal, or (b) figurative? To make it signify a sacramental washing, is to read into these statements what is not apparently in them, and to find behind the words what is not plainly on the surface. There is undeniably a figurative and spiritual "washing," as well as a literal and baptismal "washing." Consequently, whenever, and wherever, this idea occurs in Scripture, it is illegitimate to give it the one fast and fixed meaning of a ritual application of literal and realistic water.

The laver in the Jewish ceremonial was an emblem of purification, and because water prosaically and truly is an abstergent agent, it easily and naturally becomes a figure of speech for sanctifying and purifying the soul by the grace of the Holy Spirit. There is, consequently, in these places, not

the remotest allusion to the sacrament of baptism, as the means by which converting grace is applied.

But we are told that Paul distinctly reasons, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 22). The apostle thus teaches explicitly, we are assured, that baptism invests the baptized subject with Christ, after some manner analogous to that in which a man is clad in his garments. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father; even so we should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 3,4). Baptism therefore introduces Christians into his atoning death, and imparts to them the newness of life. "As he died, and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness" (Rom. vi. 5). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). Finally, Peter expresses the same thought when, in speaking of Noah's Ark, he said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter iii. 21).

In the Scriptures there are two creations—one literal and the other figurative; two births—the one literal and the other figurative; two deaths—the one literal and the other figurative; two ressurrections—the one literal and the other figurative; two baptisms—the one literal and the other figurative. To which baptism—the literal or the figurative—is reference made in these passages? The literal is sacramental with water; the figurative is spiritual and with the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is the hinge of the whole matter.

An expositor, having the equipoise of criticism and the balanced sanity of interpretation, cannot

construe the context of any of the foregoing quotations, without treating the main words as figures of speech. Take the text from Galatians, about "being baptized into Christ," and the immediate verse tells us, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28). Who, by the application of literalism here, would be willing to make the apostle contradict common sense, and utter the sheerest nonsense? His statement is true *spiritually*; it is not true *literally*. Men are both male and female. But the "baptism," of which he speaks, is imbedded in the very bosom of figurative words, and must naturally be construed as spiritual baptism, and not as the sacrament. So, in the other places where the *baptism is unto death*, the general figure represents baptism as a burial of the believer into the atoning death of Christ, which must take place before the resurrection to newness of life can ensue. The "death" is spiritual; the "resurrection" is spiritual; the "planting" is spiritual; the "putting on" is spiritual; consistency and harmony require us to construe the "baptism" as spiritual. Consequently the generalization is legitimate, that, in this group of passages, no referrence whatever is made to the sacrament of baptism, but to a figurative baptism of the Spirit.

To "baptize" anything, is to bring the new subject baptized under the dominant influence of the baptizing element. To be baptized with wine, is not to use wine as a sacramental element, but to be drunk; to be baptized with poppy juice, is not to use liquid opium as the sacramental element, but to put to sleep; to be baptized with patriotism, is a figure of speech for expressing the controlling passion of love of country; to be baptized by the Spirit, is to be brought under the power and sway of his gracious influence. This, according to the Christian system,

is absolutely indispensible to salvation, the *causa salutis*. This is the work of baptism, not the sacramental ordinance, of which this great apostle to the Gentiles writes in these and other passages.

That this was his meaning, becomes irrefutable, when we hear how earnestly he said to the Corinthians: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus. Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. i. 14–17). But if baptism regenerates *ex opero operato;* if baptism and regeneration are so inseparably connected that he who receives the one receives the other; if the only way to inaugurate Christian experience be by baptizing; how shall we harmonize the apostle's zeal for the salvation of men with his, "I thank God I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanus?" Upon sacramentarian premises, one would expect him to glory and rejoice in the baptisms which he had administered: but on the contrary, he glorifies in preaching, and rejoices in his not baptizing. He distinctly declares that his mission was to preach, and not to baptize; that is, he was charged by Christ to do the unessential and less important thing (preach), and to leave undone the absolutely essential and only saving thing (baptism). It is incredible that Paul could have so egregiously misconstrued the "great commission," under which he was operating as a minister of Jesus Christ.

That baptism cannot be the only or even the ordinary means of conveying the grace of regeneration—of so connecting the soul and the sacrament as to initiate a state of saving grace—is proved by several considerations drawn from the Scriptures.

1. Faith and repentance, justification and sanctification, are steadily and persistently represented as the fruits, as the consequences, of regeneration; while faith and repentance are set forth as prerequisites to baptism. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38). The implication is that if they did not "repent," neither should they be baptized: repentance, therefore, is causative, and baptism is consequential. Philip said to the Ethiopian eunuch, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest (be baptized)" (Acts viii. 37). Here again is the clear implication: If thou dost not "believe," thou mayest not be baptized: faith is, therefore, causative, and baptism is consequential. Again, Peter said to the assembled multitude, concerning Cornelius and his household, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts x. 47). Here again the implication is plain: these persons have received the Holy Ghost, therefore they may be lawfully baptized: so the reception of the Spirit was antecedent and causative, and baptism was secondary and consequential. Peter, having been accused of going in to the uncircumcized Gentiles, defended himself in this manner: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the words of the Lord, how he had said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as the Lord gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God" (Acts ii. 15–17). Peter baptized these persons, because God granted his Spirit to them: to do otherwise, would have been to withstand God: therefore, the gift of the Spirit was the ground of baptism, and not the cause or the means of the bestowment of the Spirit. We are

compelled to set up this generalization: Baptism is to be administered as a sign of a state of grace already begun, and not as a sacramental cause, directly or indirectly, creating the first beginnings of a Christian experience.

2. Our gospel makes it perfectly plain, that faith, faith alone, without any sacramental supplement or appendix, is the instrumental condition of salvation, whose absence, whether with or without baptism, insures a sinner's condemnation. Paul and Silas said to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). His baptism followed his saving faith, and was ceremonially indicative of it. Paul was careful to teach, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). "By grace ye are saved through faith" (Eph. ii. 8). Therefore being justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1). "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith" (Rom. iii. 26–30).

3. This theory of baptismal regeneration is discredited by its history. Multitudes of the baptized, of all ages and nations, fail to bring forth the "fruits of the Spirit" on the one hand, and do actually exhibit the "works of the flesh" on the other hand; and our Lord himself has laid down for us this canon of judgment and criticism, "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20). Multitudes, who have never been baptized, love righteousness: the Old

Testament patriarchs and the thief on the cross are conspicuous illustrations of this proposition. If it be said that they were circumcized, the whole case is surrendered, because some lived and died prior to the institution of circumcision; and Abraham first believed, and received circumcision as a sign and seal of the faith which he had; and the Scriptures categorically assert, that "it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the circumcision through faith" (Rom. iii. 30); and further, to assert that the thief on the cross, the apostles themselves, and the martyr Stephen, were baptized, is an argument *ad ignorantiam.*

Moreover, the testimony of indisputable history is, that the ages and communities in which this doctrine has been most conspicuously held and most strenuously applied, have been distinguished for their spiritual barrenness and dead formality. The steady and resistless trend of this doctrine, history being the witness, has been to a religion of external and magical forms, promoting a revolt of reason among the intelligent, and a cringing superstition on the part of the ignorant and morbid.

As little obvious as it may at first appear, the world's mind has been unbound, and free to investigate, for only about three hundred years. For years it was swathed in an inactivity, which resulted in almost total impotence.

It is next to impossible to get the ordinary reader to understand, how abjectly benighted was the thought of the Middle Ages. It is still more difficult for any of us to comprehend, that this darkness was shared, not only by the common people and the moderately educated, but also by those who, in every respect, were the foremost spirits of their time. A careful examination will show us the monstrous absurdities, which were welcomed as sober and important truths, and ranked as essential elements

in the general stock of knowledge, cherished by the most enlightened; but, even then, it will be hard for us to believe, that there ever was such a state of society, so lorded by tyranny, and enthralled by ignorance. It was a period when the very Universities had a curriculum of follies, and graduated their students upon attainments in nonsense.

But however extravagant and astounding this may sound, the more we look into history anterior to the Seventeenth Century, the more completely will the besotted condition of the European mind be made to appear an historic fact.

"Now and then a great man arose, who had his doubts about the universal belief; who whispered a suspicion as to the existence of giants thirty feet high, of dragons with wings, and of armies flying through the air; who thought that astrology might be a cheat, and necromancy a bubble; and who even went so far as to raise a question as to the propriety of drowning every witch and burning every heretic. A few such men there undoubtedly were; but they were despised as mere theorists, idle visionaries, who, unacquainted with the practice of life, arrogantly opposed their own reason to the wisdom of their ancestors. In the state of society in which they were born it was impossible that they should make any permanent impression. Indeed, they had enough to do to look to themselves, and provide for their own security; for, until the latter part of the Sixteenth Century, there was no country in which a man was not in great personal peril if he expressed open doubts respecting the belief of his contemporaries." —*Buckle.*

The cause of this deplorable condition is easy to trace. The Church had gone on gradually aggrandizing itself, until it had erected an imperial throne in every department of human life, and from that seat of authority, it prescribed and commanded everywhere and in everything. Nothing was exempted from its dogmatism. Religion, politics, philosophy,

science, literature, art, and all the affairs of mankind, were placed under the domination of the ecclesiastics, who regulated one subject as absolutely as they did another. The will of the priest swept the gamut of existence. It was therefore hazardous to think; it was criminal to investigate: for thinking might lead to difference in judgment, and investigation might end in the denial of dogma. A man's only protection was in ignorance, and his only safety in unquestioning credulity. He must dementalizé himself, depotentiate his power of reason, in order to be equal to the task of swallowing any absurdity, which might be prescribed to him upon the pain of temporal and eternal death. Paralysis of intellect was the prime desideratum of every being who would exist in peace.

Had the Church's usurpation of authority been limited to the sphere of religion, its exercise of excessive lordship would have resulted only in cramping the conscience, and compressing the world's moral life. That would have been an appalling disaster; but the ecclesiastics went out of the department of religion, and in an *ex cathedra* manner defined all political maxims, and prescribed all civil constitutions; laid down all doctrines of philosophy and put their imprematur upon all permissible theories of science; specified the forms of literature, and the conceptions of art, which were to be tolerated. The mind of the world was actually harnessed, and driven like a dumb brute in the shafts.

There had been some mitigation had the ecclesiastics themselves been men of thought and learning, of seership and inspiration, of outlook and forecast, of study and investigation; but the minds of the clergy were as sodden as the intellects of the veriest clodhoppers, upon whom they bound their ridiculous traditions. Each priest lay in wait to libel as a heretic his brother. The moment an eccesiastic

moved an inch from the beaten path of antiquity, he was seized with a mailed hand, and life was extinct when the hold was relaxed. The world's mind stagnated, for immobility is the law of death. Like a foul pond it bred, not only fantastic and grotesque ideas, but pestilential errors, which destroyed religion, politics, philosophy, literature, science, and art.

"From the Fourth Century," says Taine, "gradually the dead letter was substituted for the living faith. Christians resigned themselves into the hands of the clergy, they into the hands of the Pope. Christian opinions were subordinated to theologians, and theologians to the Fathers. Christian faith was reduced to the accomplishment of works, and works to the accomplishment of ceremonies. Religion flowing through the first centuries, had become hardened and crystalized, and the coarse contact of the barbarians placed on it, in addition, a layer of idolatry: theocracy and the inquisition manifested themselves, the monopoly of the clergy and the prohibition of the Scriptures, the worship of relics and the purchase of indulgences. In place of Christianity, the Church; in place of a free belief, an imposed orthodoxy; in place of moral fervor, determined religious practices; in place of heart and energetic thought, external and mechanical discipline: these are the characteristics of the middleage. Under this constraint a thinking man had ceased to think; philosophy was turned into a text-book, and poetry into raving; and mankind, slothful and crouching, made over their conscience and their conduct into the hands of these priests, and were as puppets, capable only of reciting catechims and chanting hymns,"

But one day in the Sixteenth Century, Martin Luther, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Wittenberg, caught himself thinking. He tried to stop; but had as well command seatides to cease beating against the cliffs, and sink themselves into a complacent calm. He tried next to direct the thinking, which could not be stayed, into the ordained

ways of the ecclesiastics; but as well try to change the course of the Pleides, which are obedient only to the laws of gravity. The resistless dynamics of his mind had been released, and the logic of his thought swept him on and out, in spite of all the orders and fulminations from Rome and his superiors. There is for him no option; he must shatter his mind, or he must shatter his fetters. It is mental death if he submits; there is a thread of hope, if he throws the whole weight of his personality into the struggle for mental emancipation. He nailed his theses upon the church door, and appealed to the world, a part of which gradually joined him in the contest.

There is in physics what is called the "parallelogram of forces." It is destined to illustrate the effect of forces, operating at right angles to each other, at the same moment, upon the same body. Imagine, if you please, a parallelogram lying due east and west, with an ivory ball stationary at its southwest corner; then conceive of a force from the south impinging upon the ball, which, if unhindered, would carry it due north; while an equal force, coming from the west at the same moment, would move it due east; these two rectangular forces would combine, and the ball would take the diagonal of the parallelogram, and be sent by the combination from the southwest to the northeast. The diagonal of the parallelogram represents the resultant of the two rectangular forces.

The history of the world is the product of a play of forces:—forces multiform and manifold—forces physical, vital and spiritual—forces mechanical, political, social, and religious—forces operating from every point of the compass, and impinging upon the world at every angle—forces above forces, forces across forces, forces within forces, and forces against forces—all combining to move the world along the diagonal of development. Each century of time,

each cycle of history, is but the resultant of the forces operating within its boundaries, and giving its distinctive focus to the period.

If, therefore, the whole sacramentarian theory is a misconception of the biblical scheme of salvation; if baptism neither *ex opere operato*, nor yet so entangles its subject in the covenants of grace as to implicate their redemption; if there is no inseparable connection between the sign and the thing signified, so that he who receives the sacrament *ipso facto* receives the sacramental grace; if all the sacraments, baptism included, are but the signs and seals of a gracious experience, antecedently inaugurated by the Holy Spirit; then all the logical inferences herefrom, as to the fate of those infants, who die unbaptized, fall to the ground, for the good and sufficient reason, that the theological premises, upon which they are supposed to rest, are unscriptural and fallacious. If the Christian mind could be delivered from every trace of this pestiferous heresy of baptismal regeneration, the way would be cleared for a rational theology of infant salvation; but, so long as the Church remains tainted by this baleful doctrine, an inexorible logic will drive it to the invention of some imaginary fate, like the *limbus infantum*, for those unfortunate babies, who die untouched by baptismal waters.

When every scrap has been granted to the sacramentarian, for which he contends: when all his premises have been conceded, and all his conclusions have been acknowledged; when the full truth of his entire fallacious soteriology has been predicated; he has provided for the salvation of only such infants as die baptized; while his reasoning, inexorably, dooms to endless death the countless multitude of moral minors and incompetents, who go down to their graves without the baptismal waters of the hierarchy. Must we accept such abhorrent conclusions? Must

we cling to this hoary theory of redemption, amidst the wail of unnumbered lost children? Is there no interpretation of the Bible, which will rationally and consistently transplant to heaven all dead children, whether baptized or unbaptized?

Whatever may be said of other theories, sacramentarianism, the very bane of Christendom, falls short. Babes and sucklings proclaim it false from top to bottom.

CHAPTER XII.

Calvinistic Doctrine.

I have now examined the leading types of soteriology, and indicated their exact logical basing of the salvation of infants and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency.

1. The Pelagian and Rationalistic school grounded the salvation of this class of persons in their *sinlessness*, construing them as salvable because they are moral innocents; and I have urged that this general scheme was, (a) incorrect in its primary predications concerning infant character, and (b) incorrect in proposing a scheme of salvation in which neither Christ as an atoning sacrifice, nor the Spirit as a sanctifier, could have any thing to do in saving children; for if children are salvable upon the ground of what they are not, they are not salvable upon the ground of what Christ has done for them, or the Spirit may do in them.

2. I next passed in review the theory, that infants are *incapable* of being probationers, and therefore are salvable because they are moral incompetents; and I rejected this hypothesis for the reason, (a) that ability is not the measure of obligation, and (b) children, during their minority, are not to be construed as agents acting, but as patients acted upon:

these are sound principles in law, in theology, in the family, in society, in common life.

3. I next considered the theory which grounds the salvation of infants in the general *benevolence* of God, which construed their creaturehood as the reason for their being saved; and discarded it, (a) because it misinterpreted the character of God on the one hand, and (b) overlooked the unlovely depravity of the child's heart on the other.

4. I then examined the theory which made the universal *fatherhood* of God a premise, and treated all children, as by nature, the children of God; and objected to its reasoning, (a) because its premise was incorrect in fact, and (b) because it would give the children no part nor lot in the saving work of Christ, inasmuch as it would make their natural sonship the supreme reason for their redemption.

5. I then took up the racial theory, which seeks to account for the salvation of infants by making them units in a *race,* whose racial substance has been redeemed by Christ and sanctified by the Spirit, and whose premature death cut them off from all chances to make their evolution miscarry by any voluntary transgression; and dismissed it as untenable, (a) because it made a bare abstraction the subject of all redemptional operations, and (b) because it radically shifted the centre of the gospel from the cross to the cradle of the Rrdeemer.

6. I then turned to the theory of a *post mortem* probation, which sent the infant out of this world into the disembodied state, there to grow to maturity, and, as a mature probationer, in the disembodied world, to issue the matter by the free choice of his own will; and discarded this view, (a) because life is not probationary, and (b) because it involves the conclusion that an infant is not, as an infant, a salvable being.

7. I then turned to the Arminian theory, which assumes the original guilt and depravity of the infant, but grounds its salvability in the *universality of the atonement*, which carried away the guilt, but left the depravity of original sin; and concluded that this view was untenable, (a) because it contained no provision for cleansing the child's depraved nature, and (b) construed the atonement as applicable to children, *quoad hoc*, without their conscious and free choice, which would be a self-inconsistency.

8. I then subjected to examination the sacramentarian theory, which grounds the salvation of infants in *baptism;* and dismissed this hypothesis for the reason, (a) that it misconstrued the nature of the redemptive plan, and (b) explicitly provided for the damnation of unbaptized babies dying without the sacraments of the Church.

9. There remains but one other ground-form of theology—Calvinism—and, if this fails us, all is lost; and the world can pursue but one of two courses: (a) believe all infants dying in infancy are damned; or (b) believe, irrationally and blindly, that they are somehow saved, and abandon all hope of making this precious faith *intelligent*.

Let us then see if Calvinism can construe the case, in strict observance of Scripture and fact, in such a manner as to place dead children, sanctified by the Spirit, in the saving arms of Christ, so that they, equally with their Christian parents, may ascribe, in heaven, all the praises of their salvation to the cross of Jesus.

In the theology of the Reformers the *ordo salutis* —the schedule of salvation—is as follows: (1) creation, (2) the fall, (3) predestination, (4) redemption, (5) vocation.

Interpreting this outline, it means that Calvinism teaches that God, first of all, created the world, man, and all things, as they were in time brought into

being; that he next permitted, while having the almighty power to prevent, the initial members, the federal head, of the race to eat the forbidden fruit and fall into sin, just as the Scriptures historically recite the story; and that all mankind, descended from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in the first transgression; that out of this mass of mankind, foreseen by the divine eye as created and fallen, God predestined some to everlasting life, but, for reasons known only to himself, passed by others, and so did not include every member of the human family in the redemptive plan; that, in the fulness of time, he sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to make an efficacious atonement for those upon whom he had set his love, that they might be delivered from their guilt, and be restored to his bosom; that he finally sent his Spirit to apply to every one, nominated in his decree, the benefits of the atonement made by Christ.

In the decree of God, these persons were primarily the *electoi* (the elect) (I Pet. i. 2); in time, they became the *klatoi* (the called) (Rom. viii. 28); as revealed and made manifest, they were the *pistoi* (the believers) (Eph. i. 1); in the consummation of the redemptive application, they are the *hagioi* (the saints) (Eph. i. 1); throughout the whole process, from the eternal decree to the heavenly conclusion, they are *agapatoi* (the beloved) (Rom. viii. 28).

The Calvinist holds that the purpose of God is as wide at one end as it is at the other; as large at its beginning in his will as at its mouth in heavenly glory; that God determined to save every one who is saved; that the population of heaven and the people of the decree are numerically and personally identical. This school delights to deny, that the divine decree, somehow, got contracted between its rise in the divine mind and its execution in heaven. They

reject the analogue of a cone, with its big base in God's heart, and its small point in heaven. They rejoice to think that none of God's loved ones are lost; that there are no failures in his redemptive plan; that he undertook the salvation of no person, and then failed to make good his effort: that he is a being who never breaks down, because of blunder, nor because of weak incompetence; that he fulfils every promise, and brings to glory every person, upon whom he has set his affection; that he is not a being of after-thoughts, perpetually adjusting his plans, and shifting his procedures, to fit emergencies and altered circumstances; but that with him all is inerrant forethought; knowing the end from the beginning. The Calvinistic logic is inexorable—*what was last in execution was first in intention.*

From this let us get out, and make formal statement of, those fundamental tenets of Calvinism which have bearing upon the question of infant salvation.

I. All mankind, including infants, sinned in Adam, and fell with him in the first transgression. As to how the unborn race participated in this Adamic sin and fall, some Calvinists employ the representative, and some the realistic, principle; but in one mode or another, they are agreed, that Adam and his unborn posterity were so connected, that he and they went down together in moral ruin; that he entailed upon his natural descendants the guilt of his first sin, the loss of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature, out of which proceed all the actual sins, which mar the life of every adult. This system strenuously asserts the universality of original sin, and construes every member of the human race, Christ only excepted, as under an antenatal forfeiture of innocence and righteousness, and with a heart qualified by the twin

attributes of guilt and depravity—the one (guilt) obligating him to penalty, and the other (depravity) destinating him to a history of actual transgressions.

Because of this prenatal connection, whether federal or real, every child is born at once guilty and depraved; and therefore condemned; and therefore by nature destined to eternal death. The moral status of every child of Adam is that of a guilty, depraved, condemned thing, amenable to an eternal doom. This is the decree of *nature;* and hence Calvinists teach that all men, adults and infants included, are damnable by nature; and, if something does not happen to set aside that inexorable decree of nature, *damnability* must inevitably ultimate in actual *damnation.*

II. But that precious something does happen: God sets a *decree of grace* against the *decree of nature;* and a damnability which was destined to ultimate in damnation is converted, by the superior and irresistible power of God, into *salvation.*

If any, adult or infant, is rescued from the remorseless doom of nature, bearing all down to the burning pavements of hell, God must decree, must overmatch and set aside the decree of nature. There is no denying, that every child is born with a nature handicapped by depravity, with a lust of heart which, when it conceives in adulthood, brings forth sin; a sin which, when it is finished or completed, brings forth death.

Now for a moment, in imagination, keep the Deity off the scene, and out of the case: then what child can unclasp the dead hand which has grasped his throat? What child, without supernatural intervention, can reverse the course of nature, and turn the tides which flow downwards towards doom in the opposite direction? What young lion can convert himself into a lamb? What young leopard can

change his spotted hide? What young Ethiopian can change his black skin into one of Caucasian pink? What young Siberian crab sapling can bring forth Albemarle pippins? What young thistle bush can bear celestial figs? What young sinner can stay the course of nature, reverse the primal law of his being, and develop himself into a sinless adult?

The world has not yet witnessed, after thousands of years of experimentation and effort, one single triumphant transformation. On, and still on, nature presses its merciless decree to its execution in eternal death: God must counter-decree, or the entire race is inevitably doomed: hell is the logical and judicial finale of us every one, if nature's ongoings are not interfered with.

After the fall, after the race, adult and infant and all, has gone into the death-grasp of violated and inexorable nature, the Calvinist, with joy and with a shout of triumph, flies to the divine predestination, that counter-decree which reverses destiny, that only decree which can either lawfully or effectively countervail the doom of nature, and turn darkness into light, despair into hope, death into life, hell into heaven. Let the tide run on, and there will be woeful wreckage on the human beach; let nature course on, and there will be a stranded race on the dark shores of hell.

How strange that any human drift, should become frenzied at the Almighty, for a predestination that fixes another landing place, on the golden shores of that opalescent sea, which dashes its silvery spray over the throne of God! Where is the sanity in crying out, in protest and temper, at that divine decree, which counters the fatal course of nature? Can men be soberly aware of the true import of that, at which they complain? Would the mariner on the shipwreck, whose destiny is the bottom of the sea, if nature be allowed to have its way, be a fool, if he

villified the life-saving station for changing his destiny to a house of safety and comfort on the land? God must predestinate, or we are every one lost, whether we be an infant of eight days, or an old man of eighty years. He does predestinate: it is the sheerest madness in us to be bewailing the fact. We ought to bless the goodness that prompted him to predestinate: we ought to magnify the wisdom which devised a way, by which he could predestinate, in consistency with his justice: we ought to glorify the power, which supports, and makes effective his predestination. It is predestination, or it is damnation: the decree of God, or the decree of nature.

Dr. T. O. Summers (Arminian), the first professor of Theology in Vanderbilt University, saw this, and cried out:

"Methodism clearly perceives that to admit that mankind are actually born into the world justly under condemnation is to grant the foundation of the whole Calvinistic scheme. Granted natal desert of damnation, there can be no valid objection to the sovereign election of a few out of the reprobate mass, or to limited atonement, irresistible grace, and final perseverance to secure the present and eternal salvation of the sovereignly predestinated number."—*Systematic Theology, Vol. II., 38.*

To win his whole cause, the Calvinist has but to prove that all men, adults and infants, are born under condemnation, has but to prove his doctrine of original sin, and then there can be no "valid objection" to predestination. But the case is far stronger: admit original sin and natal condemnation therefor, and predestination *must* be invoked to counteract the course of nature, and save any man from the doom of death.

So the Calvinist believes that Adam fell, and that all mankind fell in him and with him; that the reign of sin is unto death for him, and all who were

partakers with him; that God opposed the decree of life to the decree of death; that he predestinated a destiny opposite to that destinated by nature: that the very roots of salvation are in the divine predestination.

Consequently the Calvinist follows the fall, which destinated unto death, with a divine decree which foreordains unto life. The situation being as described, the whole race being by nature helpless and deformed, who can legitimately cavil against the Almighty for predestinating to life and heaven?

The real point against the Deity, is not that he predestinated under the circumstances, but that he predestinated some and not all, that the objects of his decree were not the entire human family. Let us get the case very clearly: all were guilty, depraved, condemned, doomed; then God must predestinate, if any are saved; if he predestinates, he must predestinate some or all; he determines to save some, and to preterit others, and to leave them in the hands of nature. Here is precisely the gravamen of his offending—he predestinated a portion, probably the vast majority, yet not all.

Now "shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" "Who art thou that repliest against God?" I know not why God did not elect to save all: heaven proves he saved a multitude which no man can number: but I do not see that any man can legitimately demand that God must save everybody, or nobody. What right, what ground in sound reason, has any sinner, in the grasp of violated nature, to force such an alternative upon his Maker? What is it but a satanic spirit, which demands that he must either damn every individual, or save every individual? The decree of nature dooms us every one: to save any, God must counter-decree: he elects some and not all: he had his own reasons.

Now infants are capable of election, for, in this primal act of salvation, men are patients and not agents. If election, however, be predicated upon the divine foresight of faith and repentance and evangelical obedience, as Arminians teach, then infants cannot be the subjects of the saving decree, because they are mentally, morally and physically incapable of complying with these conditions. But if election is unconditional, as Calvinists teach, then infants are capable of being elected.

III. After creation comes the fall; after the fall, the atonement. In making atonement Christ offered himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice; and the effect of it was the cancellation of the guilt of of those whom Christ represented. In its nature it was a *bona fide* vicarious satisfaction of all the claims which law and justice had upon those, whom God had predestinated to life. The Redeemer was successful: he did precisely what he came to do; that is, his atonement was efficacious. In it, he could represent, and die for, an unborn infant just as well as for a mature and responsible adult. There is nothing in infancy to exclude it from being a beneficiary of the atonement.

If Christ died for those only whom he foresaw would repent and believe, and persevere in evangelical obedience to the end of their earthly life, if a certain future action, on the part of men, was definitive of the persons, who were to be the benificiaries of his atoning death, then there is no logical way in which to classify infants among the beneficiaries of the cross, because no infant can believe, repent and obey. If, on the contrary, the beneficiaries of the atonement be defined as all the elect, then, since infants may be elected as well as adults, this class may also be counted among the beneficiaries of the atonement. If one must do some conscious and responsible thing, some act which only a rational

adult is capable of performing, in order to become the beneficiary of the cross; it is perfectly plain, that no infant can be the subject of redemption. But if, in making the atonement, God is an agent, and the beneficiary a patient; if Christ died on the cross *for* his people, in which they were the passive recipients of the blessings procured thereby; it is perfectly obvious, that the infant may be made a beneficiary of that transaction, inasmuch as no human being was, in any sense, a copartner, or coagent, in the sacrificial death of our Lord. By dying on the cross, by offering himself as a sacrifice, the just for the unjust, Christ obeyed the law in both its penal and preceptive demands, and thereby wrought out a mediatorial righteousness, which, according to Calvinism, is imputed as the ground of justification: it is just as imputable to a baby as to an adult, because it is Christ who does the dying, and it is God who does the imputing and the justifying. There is nothing inherent in infancy to render it, *a priori*, impossible of being an object of Christ's redeeming death. There is no more inherent incompatibility in Christ dying for a human being rendered helpless by infancy, than there is in his dying for a full grown sinner rendered helpless by spiritual death. Both are helpless: both are patients: neither are agents.

A baby, then, is salvable primarily because it is electable, and it is electable, because in election God is agent, and the person elected is patient.

But the infant is salvable, in the next place, because in making the atonement God is the agent, and Christ is the sacrifice, and the beneficiary is the patient. All the redeemed were chosen before the foundation of the world, before they had any conscious being, or powers of self-determination, and consequently without any action on their part; and Christ laid down his own life, and took it again, and no beneficiary of that saving transaction had any

agency whatsoever in its making: consequently all the redeemed were, at the moment of election and atonement, uncreated and unborn. There is, therefore, absolutely nothing intrinsic to infancy, which logically and rationally and necessarily excluded it from these two redeeming acts—election and atonement.

So far, I think the case is irrefutably made out, upon Calvinistic premises, that the infant is electable and redeemable; and these are the first two steps in the salvation of any, and all, human beings who are saved.

IV. According to Calvinism, the last and completing step in the divine programme of salvation, is the application of the benefits of the atonement of Christ to individual life and experience.

Speaking in the broadest terms, it was the economic office of the Father to decree redemption, of the Son to execute that decree, and of the Spirit to apply it, and render it effective; and so the threefold divisions in the process may be appropriately denominated—(a) decretal salvation, (b) executed salvation, (c) applied salvation.

Employing a homely figure for illustration: It is the office of the architect to draw the plan of the building with all its specifications; it is the duty of the contractor to take the design from the hands of the architect, gather the materials and workmen, and erect the building according to the plan; and it is the office of the owner of the "moving car" to gather up the family, and establish it in the new house.

In some similar, but infinitely higher way, God the Father, in the fathomless abysses of his own mind, drew all the plan of "the house of many mansions;" God the Son, as a contractor, took this plan out of the hand of the Father, and by his penal and preceptive obedience—his atonement—con-

structed the house according to the pattern; and God the Spirit gathers, through the ministry of the word or otherwise, the elect people of God out of every nation and age, and domiciliates them in that heavenly house, which the Father designed for them, and which Christ built for them. According to Calvinism the efficient cause—the *causa qua*—of all Christian experience is the Holy Spirit; and the technical name for his power, as thus applied, is *grace*.

In the soteriology of the Reformers, *grace* is the dynamic power in every application of the atonement of Christ, the power which begins, continues, develops, and perfects all Christian experience, so that, in strict literalness, and with perfect exactitude, the whole scheme, in the conception of this class of theologians, is a scheme of salvation by *grace*. Regeneration—the initial act, seminally changing the nature of the sinful heart—is an act of *grace*. Faith—the first conscious act of the quickened soul which accepts Christ as its Saviour and ground of hope—is a saving *grace*, induced by the testimony of the divine Spirit. Repentance—the second converting act, in which the soul turns from self as a chief end of life to Christ as the chief end—is also a saving *grace*, induced by the operations of the Holy Ghost. Justification is also an act of God's free *grace*, wherein he pardons sin and accepts the person as righteous, on account of the righteousness of Christ, imputed by God and received by faith. Adoption—that act by which sinful persons are introduced into the number and given a right to all the privileges of the sons of God—is an act of divine *grace*, in which the beneficiary is but a recipient. Sanctification—which consists on the one hand in the elimination of sinful propensities, and on the other in the impotentiation of the soul until it is raised to the level of the Redeemer's character—is a broad,

expansive, and continuous work of *grace*. Finally glorification—that consummation of the whole redemptive process, which consists in the translation of its subject from earth to heaven—is an act of *grace*, completing all its processes and fulfilling all its promises in the hour and article of death. Thus—to the Calvinistic mind—the redemptive scheme, from the start to the finish of Christian experience, is strictly and truly a programme executed by *grace*, and not at all by "human works."

The infant, therefore, though incapable of "works" of any kind, may be a subject of grace—may be operated upon by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and changed and fitted, as an infant, for a life in heaven. Its heart may be regenerated; to it the atoning righteousness of Christ may be divinely imputed, as the ground of its justification; a child may be adopted into the family of God, even as it is adopted into a human family; its infantile life may be cleansed by the same purifying grace, which purges away the pollution of an adult sinner; and finally, there is nothing in the nature of heaven which renders child-life therein inconsistent, and incompatible with fundamental conceptions. As to these great blessings—regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification—it is perfectly clear that they may be divinely bestowed upon babies, as upon any other class of human beings.

But what shall be done about *faith* and *repentance*—two acts which the infant, confessedly, cannot perform, and which the Scriptures lay down as preconditions of all saving benefits?

It must be borne in mind, upon this point, that the Calvinists hold that faith and repentance are not the meritorious grounds of salvation, but that they are only instruments—merely connectives—in the bringing into *consciousness* the benefits of the

atonement of Christ. Their office is not to save, but to reveal salvation in human experience.

Electricity is latent in the gutta percha rod; by rubbing it with the dry mole skin, it is caused to manifest itself in ways peculiar to science: the friction does not originate, it only develops, the electricity. The *a priori* truths of the human reason are innate in the mind; but they are, by experience, elicited into consciousness: experience does not create these truths, but it does bring them up in conscious recognition. There is no sounder doctrine of philosophy than this.

Now in a similar way, regeneration takes place below consciousness: faith and repentance are those exercises, which reveal this subconscious change. Justification and adoption are primarily *in foro dei*—in the pretemporal forum of God: faith and repentance reveal these cardinal blessings *in foro conscientiae*—in the court of conscience and experience. Sanctification is a predetermined schedule of purification; faith and repentance are but instrumentalities, by which this subjective work of grace is brought out in consciousness and life.

Consequently, since an infant dies in the preconscious period of its life, these instrumentalities of faith and repentance have no office to perform, for the reason that there is no self-consciousness to be enlightened.

The title to an earthly throne is a birthright; the ceremony of coronation has it as its object to put the heir into the conscious exercise of his perogatives. Election by a Presbyterian congregation, according to the laws of this denomination, makes a minister pastor of that particular church *de jure;* his installation makes him pastor *de facto.* An infant may have a title in a vast landed estate; his coming of age puts him in conscious possession of his property.

In an alalogous way, regeneration and adoption and sanctification entitle the subject of these graces to eternal life; faith and repentance are the two converting acts, which render the beneficiary *conscious* of his religious inheritance.

But suppose the child dies before it comes of age—before it is able to consciously believe and repent—his standing would be affected in no other way than, analogously speaking, the situation would be affected should the young king die before his coronation, or the young heir die before arriving at his majority, or the minister die before his installation.

We must distinguish between salvation as a *fact*, and salvation as a *cognition* and as a *feeling*. Grace makes salvation a fact; faith and repentance make it a cognition and a feeling. By regenerating the child, the Spirit makes its salvation a fact; but dying in its minority, before it is capable of either believing or repenting, its salvation, in this life does not become to it a conscious cognition, or a joyous feeling, or an evangelical obedience; but if the regenerated infant lives to maturity, then what was seminally planted in its regeneration must develop into a conscious faith and repentance—a full religious experience. In other words, dying in infancy, its religious experience is infantile, even as it is childish in its mind and body; nevertheless it is, as infantile, true and normal; but if it comes to maturity, and the years of accountable action, its religion must likewise, under the influence always of divine grace, put off its childish form, and put on the form of a man, the chief characteristics of which are faith, repentance and evangelical obedience.

Then it is strictly true to say that the regenerated infant, had it come to age, would have, under the tuitions of grace, come to believe, repent and obey the gospel; what was implicit and infantile would

have come to be explicit and mature. An infant is an immature man; a regenerated infant is an immature Christian: all that was in the full-grown man was incipiently in the wee small baby; and all that is in the fully developed Christian was incipiently in the regenerated child.

If, however, faith and repentance and evangelical obedience be construed as the grounds, the materials, the premises, of salvation; then, inasmuch as these prementioned things are not possible for infants as such, irrefrangible logic would shut us up to the conclusion of the impossibility of the salvation of any infant dying in infancy. But inasmuch as Calvinists, strenuously and avowedly, contend that faith and repentance and evangelical obedience are forms of the Spirit's operation, mere phenomena of Christian life, they can logically, and consistently, hold that dead infants are salvable in the same way, that a horticulturist can hold that the young sprout, cut down before it bloomed or bore any fruit, was a genuine fig sapling. Herein is its distinguishing superiority to all other conceptions of the philosophy of salvation, which propose some sort of "works"—ethical, sacramental or evangelical—as the *raison d'etre* of human redemption.

Calvinism, therefore, permits the adherents of its soteriological system to hold that, though all infants are by nature guilty and depraved and amenable to an eternal doom, they are yet truly and strictly salvable; (a) because they are electable by the Father, (b) because they are atonable by Christ, (c) because they are vocable by the Spirit. They are not illogical, nor trifling, nor insincere, because the fundamental premises of the system itself construe infants, as such, as the possible subjects, (a) of God's electing love, (b) of Christ's atoning blood, (c) of the Spirit's regenerating grace.

With respect then to election, Calvinism dis-

tributes all infants into two classes,—(a) elect infants, and (b) non-elect infants. With respect to the atonement, they distribute all infants into two classes—(a) those infants for whom Christ died, and (b) those infants for whom Christ did not die. And with respect to regeneration, they again divide all infants into two classes,—(a) those who are regenerated by the Spirit, and (b) those who are not regenerated by the Spirit. The personnel of each (a) class is the same, and the personnel of each (b) class is the same.

The critic of the Calvinist, insistently and naggingly, asks the question, What would be the final fate of an infant in class (b), if he should die in infancy? Not waiting for the Calvinist to reply, that the question is purely hypothetical and impossible, the critic answers his own question by announcing to the world, (a) that Calvinism admits that some non-elect, non-redeemed, non-regenerated infants die in their infancy, and (b) that Calvinists teach that there are "infants in hell not a span long."

But what does the Calvinist aver upon this point? He teaches, (a) that *if* non-elect, non-redeemed, non-regenerated children were to die in this condition, they would be justly damnable on account of their guilt, but (b) they assiduously teach that the hypothecation is a sheer impossibility, for as a matter of fact no reprobate infant does, or can die, in its infancy.

Of *elect* infants, (a) some die in infancy, and (b) some grow to maturity.

Concerning those who die in infancy, they are saved (1) because they were elected by the Father, (2) redeemed by the Son, (3) regenerated by the Spirit, and (4) they would have believed, and been repentant and obedient to the gospel, had they lived to moral maturity.

Concerning those elect infants which do not die

but live to moral manhood, they too are saved, (1) because they were elected by the Father, (2) redeemed by the Son, (3) regenerated by the Spirit, and (4) in the fullness of time evidenced their salvation by actually believing, repenting, and obeying the gospel.

Of *reprobate* infants, it is held, (a) that none of this class die in infancy, but (b) that they all come to maturity, and express the evil that is in them by sundry voluntary and conscious acts of transgression, of varying degrees of heinousness; which overt acts call up into consciousness the sinfulness which is subjective to the natures with which they are born, and so give to them a ground, in conscious experience, for recognizing and appreciating their condemnation.

By what process of reasoning can the Calvinist exhibit to his own mind, and to other minds equally unbiased, the truth of his proposition, that all infants dying in infancy were elect, redeemed, regenerated, and finally glorified in heaven? He must make good this assertion, or he begs the whole question in debate. The *onus probandi* is squarely upon him, and he must intelligently meet the issue, or convict himself as hypothecating—as the Romanist hypothecates a *limbus infantum*—just to meet the exigencies of his soteriological position. Does he thus blindly hypothecate, or can he prove, in a sane and balanced and rational way, that all infants, without exception, dying in infancy are truly and fully saved?

Here let a preliminary word of caution be spoken. The Calvinist does not hold, nor teach, that infant death is the cause of infant salvation. There is nothing in death itself which is intrinsically saving; on the other hand it is *per se* an evil, consequent upon sin, and provocative of the deepest lamentation, except as it may be overruled and eradicated by

divine grace. Neither the child nor the adult is saved by death, nor on account of death, for death is but the gateway through which human beings pass out of this world into another state of existence; and the salvation of the individual must take place on this side of the grave, and be to the child of God, whether infant or adult, but the outlet into heavenly life. The death of the infant is only *evidential* of its salvation.

In the case of an adult, who has come to consciousness and responsibility, and who has been regenerated by the Spirit, faith, repentance, evangelical obedience and all the fruits of the Spirit are the evidences, which show the gracious changes which have taken place in its moral nature; but in the case of an infant, which dies prior to its conscious accountability, death is the conclusive proof of its regeneration and glorification. It has, however, no such evidential value in the case of an adult, for the reason that there is, and must be, a difference between the death of a conscious and unconscious being—differences founded in fact and in reality.

Penalty is suffering inflicted on account of guilt. There are two sorts of suffering, and but two: penal suffering and disciplinary suffering. They may coincide as to form, but they differ as to motive and aim. Justice inflicts penal suffering; love inflicts disciplinary suffering. The end of penal suffering is to bring the sentient person into conscious connection with that suffering which justice, in its strict rigor, adjudges to be proportionate to, and merited by, the offence committed against law; the end of disciplinary suffering, or chastisement, is to improve the person upon whom it is inflicted. The one kind, penal, is inflicted by the justice of a law-court; the other kind, disciplinary, is inflicted by a father's house. The one, penal, is the exhibition of magisterial wrath; the other, disciplinary, is exhibited by

paternal love. The end of the one, penal suffering, is to vindicate justice, regardless of its effect upon the sufferer; the end of the other, disciplinary suffering, is to satisfy paternal love, and correct, and remedy the defects cognized.

Herein is the deep distinction between moral government and moral discipline, a distinction so often and so disastrously overlooked. The sheriff may thrash his son, as a convicted citizen, at the public whipping-post under orders from the court having jurisdiction; that would be punishment: the same sheriff, as a father, may thrash the same son in the back yard with the same rods; that would be chastisement.

For punishment to be rational and effective, the subject punished must be sentient, and fully conscious, so that his conscience may recognize the reason why he suffers. Let us suppose the criminal to be unconscious—asleep or drugged with an opiate—at the moment the penalty is inflicted; he would, under the circumstances, be insensible and unconscious, and so the very ends of all punishment would be defeated. Why does not the state chloroform the criminal, whom it feels bound to execute on the gallows, and so render him insensible to the awful ordeal? The reason is obvious; not because the officers of the law are unmerciful and inhuman, but because the very meaning and significance of the suffering could not, under the circumstances, be made manifest to the victim of outraged justice.

Suppose one not guilty were hanged: to him it would not be punishment, because his conscience could not recognize that element of guilt in himself which is the cause, the ground, the reason, for the infliction. It could be punishment only in the eyes of the onlooker, because he imagined the really innocent to be guilty; but the sufferer himself would be destitute of the ability to construe his sufferings

as penal, because he could not antecedently construe himself as a criminal.

Suppose, again, a man, drunk to unconsciousness, should, while unconscious, commit a vile murder, in the presence of the criminal court, there and then in session, with a docket arranged so as to act immediately upon his case, and all the law and circumstances such that it would be legal and proper to execute him there and then upon the spot; what would be the rational course of procedure? Hang him instantly in his state of intoxicated unconsciousness, or delay until he should become sober and conscious, and then hang him, when he could in conscience recognize the criminality of his deed, and appreciate the suffering as punishment? Manifestly wisdom and cold justice would suggest a delay in the execution, until the unconscious man should come to himself, and so be able to appreciate in conscience the reason for his execution.

Penal suffering, to be strictly penalty, must be recognized as such in the consciousness of the sufferer, else it would be to him unmeaning and causeless pain. The element of awareness is an essential ingredient in rational punishment.

An infant, being a sentient creature, is capable of suffering; but being an unconscious creature, with faculties too immature to understand and appreciate the reason for suffering, it is incapable of being punished, strictly and truly speaking. Its only guilt is Adamic and federal; guilt, therefore, of which it is not aware, and of which it can become conscious only by growing to the years of maturity, and expressing its sinfulness in its own voluntary and conscious acts of transgression.

If it were sent to hell on no other account than that of original sin, there would be a good reason to the divine mind for the judgment, but the child's mind would be a perfect blank as to the reason of its

suffering. Under such circumstances, it would know suffering, but it would have no understanding of the *reason* for its suffering. It could not tell its neighbor—it could not tell itself—why it was so awfully smitten; and consequently the whole meaning and significance of its sufferings, being to it a conscious enigma, the very essence of penalty would be absent, and justice would be disappointed of its vindication.

Such an infant could feel that it was in hell, but it could not explain, to its own conscience, why it was there. If another should inform the child of the crime for which it was suffering the pangs of hell, it might believe on testimony and accept the truth by faith in the informer, but it would still be destitute of any fact in its consciousness or conscience, of any deed in its own history, upon which it could rest an experimental conviction of its ill-desert and damnation. It would be, experimentally, blankly ignorant.

For suffering to be truly penal there are two necessary conditions: (1) there must be a reason satisfying the conscience of him who inflicts it, and (2) there must be a reason certifying guilt to the conscience of him who experiences the suffering.

Adamic guilt—original sin—is a reason which satisfies the divine conscience, because he perceives it; and because of it, he passes a sentence of condemnation, and therefore judges the unborn posterity of Adam to be damnable. That is a righteous condemnation; but Adamic sin, not being in the consciousness of the infant, the *execution* of the divine judgment prior to the child's maturity, would leave the child's mind unacquainted with the reason for its assignation to hell-torments, and without the power to appreciate the cause therefor; and then the divine being would know, that the child does not know, why it has been so terribly afflicted, and that

it suffers in conscious ignorance of its offence; and that would leave his justice unsatisfied, and defeat the very purpose of the divine being in sending any person to hell.

Let it be understood that God does not send any human being to woe just for the sake of suffering, but in order to inflict *penalty*, and vindicate law and justice. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked—suffering, as such, is not a matter in which he delights; he can view it, with toleration and complacency, only as he contemplates it in the category of a penalty, which satisfies the attribute of justice. He is no Jupiter Tonans, hurling bolts from Olympus just to frighten the creatures of his hand: he is no pitiless Moloch, casting his children into the fire just to see them writhe in agony; he is no exacting Shylock, cutting out the pound of flesh next to the heart just to satiate his disappointed greed; he is no wanton Cetebos, sticking pins in his sentient creatures for the pleasure of seeing them jump.

He does inflict the torments of hell, but he inflicts them, because the person of the evil-doer and suffering *ought* to be brought into connection with each other, even as the righteous earthly judge connects the person of the criminal and forms of suffering together, not to gratify a morbid cruelty, but because the thing *ought* to be done, to preserve the majesty and dignity and force of law and order and justice. Washington wept when he signed the death-warrant of the attractive Major Andre; he did it because it ought to be done.

To execute the death-penalty upon the unconscious infant would be, for God to defeat the only motive he has for sending any human being to an endless hell. Hence the child which, on account of its federal guilt, is punishable *de jure*, is not, as such, punishable *de facto*. The sentence of condemnation for original sin was just; but the *execution*

of that sentence, expediency demands, shall be delayed until the child, through actual sinning can be made aware.

What course shall the divine providence pursue with respect to the *reprobate* infant? What course does reason and wisdom and justice suggest, when we remember that the whole purpose, and meaning of God, in sending any human being to hell is to meet out to him that penal suffering, which as a sentient being he shall feel, and as an intelligent being he shall understand and appreciate? There is, there can be, but one answer to this question: *Providence must delay the death of the reprobate infant until he comes to maturity, and translates his original sin into conscious actual sin, so there may be a basis, not simply in law and truth, but in consciousness and conscience and experience for penalty.*

Consequently a reprobate infant cannot die in infancy: such a result would defeat the ends of justice. Consequently and conversely, all infants dying in infancy are elect, redeemed, regenerated and glorified.

The death of an infant, therefore, is the irrefrangible *proof* of its salvation. But its living, and coming of age, is not a proof of its non-election, and an assurance of its ultimate damnation, because, as an adult, it may evince by believing, repenting and obeying the gospel, that it was elect. If, therefore, we see the infant die, we *absolutely know,* that it was elect of God, a beneficiary of the atoning blood of Jesus, and a subject of the regenerating grace of the Spirit; but if we see the infant live and grow to manhood, then we are agnostic as to its election, until we see the fruits of the Spirit in his adult life, and then we know by that evidence that he too was elect.

Nothing can prove the non-election, and non-

salvation of any man, except we see him die in unbelief, impenitence, and disobedience; and inasmuch as all human collection of data is imperfect and all human judgment is errant, every balanced man will be cautious and hesitant in pronouncing the doom of any individual; while concerning dead infants, and many adults, he will be perfectly dogmatic and assured in pronouncing for them a fate in endless bliss and glory. God has given us almost infinitely clearer reasons for judging the salvation of particular individuals, than he has given signs, by which to be confident and categorical in concluding that any particular person was lost.

We know from the data of human history that all infants are sinful, and we are compelled to infer therefrom, that they are by nature damnable; but are any of them, as infants, actually damned? That is the supreme question.

We know from the Scripture that such is the nature of election, redemption and regeneration, that any infant, as such, could be a subject of salvation—that there is nothing in infancy which renders the application of the redemption by Christ inherently incompatible and impossible: but is that application actually made to all who perish in infancy?

We know that infants do die: is theirs a penal or a disciplinary death? If it is penal, from the nature of the case they cannot be made to appreciate and realize, its punitive character and damnatory intent: it is for them suffering but suffering without meaning to their intelligence. If it is construed as disciplinary and beneficial, we can understand how it benefits them in that it cuts them off from all actual sin, from all conscious sorrow, translates them to a heavenly home to grow as plants in the garden of the Lord, and through the very experience of suffering enables them to enter sympathetically and

appreciatively into the praise of Christ as their Saviour.

What is the final cause, the teleology, the purpose, of infant death? If punitive in its design, they cannot appreciate the fact; if beneficient, through it they can be brought into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and be cosharers in the worship around the throne of the Lamb, and mingle their infant voices with those of adults in the multitudinous hallelujas which deluge the throne of Christ.

Since, then, there is reason for elect infants dying, can we fairly and intelligently resist the conclusion, that all infants dying in infancy are elect, redeemed and regenerated? If infant death be construed as a gateway to heaven, there is an obvious reason for it; but if it be construed as a gateway to hell, it seems altogether useless.

Original sin is a valid and adequate ground upon which to rest the damnability of the race, and upon that ground God does pronounce a sentence of universal condemnation, which is a judgment, *de lege*, that all the natural sons of Adam are amenable to an eternal doom; but it would also seem that *actual sin* is necessary to furnish an adequate and satisfactory ground upon which to base the *actual* damnation of any.

Let us get the distinction between the passing of a sentence, and the execution of that sentence. The distinction is obvious and familiar, and I need but refer to that custom in criminal law, where the judge pronounces the sentence and the sheriff executes it, and days, months, and even years may lapse between the pronouncement and the execution of the sentence. Now both of these—sentence and execution—need intelligent basing. On account of prenatal and Adamic sin, God pronounced the sentence of damnation *in foro dei*, and that sort of sin is a good and sufficient and indisputable ground in his court of

justice for judging all human beings worthy of death; but on account of actual sin—personal, conscious, and voluntary transgression of the law—the sentence of damnation is executed, and *damnability* is transmuted into *damnation;* and by this sort of sin the righteousness of the sinner's execution is made manifest in his own experience. Consequently, while all are damnable on account of Adam's sin, none are actually damned except for their own sins. But the infant dying in infancy commits no actual sin: but we are not warranted in inferring therefrom that the infant is not damnable; but we must conclude that grace has interposed and taken away the grounds of damnability, and made the dead child salvable through Christ.

In this argument I am no Pelagian, because the infant is not innocent; I am no Semipelagian, because the infant is damnable; I am no Sentimentalist, because the infant is unlovely; I am no Paternalist, because the infant has been disinherited; I am no Racialist, because the infant is an individual; I am no Second Probationist, because the infant's destiny is fixed this side the grave; I am no Arminian, because the atonement is limited; nor Sacramentarian, because the infant may be unbaptized. I am a Calvinist, holding that the infant by nature is both guilty and depraved and condemned; but that it is elected by the love of the Father, and redeemed by the grace of the Spirit, and that the death of the infant is the proof of these saving facts. All is done for the infant that is done for the Christian adult, except that the religion of an adult comes to consciousness in this life, while the infant passes from these earthly scenes before it attains to discretion.

Calvinism, then, is the only soteriology which makes the salvation of a single infant a possibility; the only soteriology which makes the salvation of all

dead infants evangelical. The Pelagian seeks to save the infant because he is sinless; the Semipelagian because he is not guilty; the Sentimentalist because he is lovely; the Paternalist because he is a natural child of the Creator; the Racialist because he is a human being; the Second Probationist postpones his salvation till after death; the Arminian because the atonement liquidated his guilt; the Sacramentarian because he was baptized; the Calvinist because he was a subject of electing love, redeeming blood, and regenerating grace. Calvinism applies the gospel to the case, and shows how a sinful and condemned babe is saved by grace even as others. The ability of this system to construe the case of the infant dying in infancy, and provide for his salvation without distorting a single fact of nature, or warping a single statement of Scripture, is one of the strongest commendations of it as a true reduction of the gospel scheme; and the fact that many can charge it with logically teaching the doctrine of infant damnation, is one of the proofs of how utterly the multitute of its outside expositors, and critics, fail to understand this profound but consistent, this fearless but glorious, interpretation of God's scheme of saving grace.

We have then three great questions, concerning the salvation of infants.

1. Is the infant, as such, salvable? Our Calvinism answers this question in the affirmative, and sustains its answer with evangelical reasons. Election by the Father, atonement by the Son, and regeneration by the Spirit, are the respective functions of the three persons in the Godhead in the salvation of any human being. In each of these great saving acts, the subject is passive, and not an agent. Consequently an infant may be the subject of all three, inasmuch as neither of the three is conditioned by any thing in the creature, or to be done

by the creature. Election being unconditional, and atonement being unconditional, and regeneration being unconditional, an infant, as such, may be the subject of these trinitarian saving acts. Therefore the infant, as such, is salvable.

2. If the infant is salvable, how is it actually saved? Our Calvinism gives an evangelical account of how it is saved, by indicating that it is sovereignly elected by the Father, atoned for by the Son on the cross, and regenerated by the Spirit. Faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience are not the causes, but the effects and fruits of salvation. Adults believe, and repent, and obey the gospel, because they have been antecedently elected by the Father, and atoned for by the Son, and regenerated by the Spirit. Since, then, faith and repentance and obedience are thus effects, and not causes, of redemption, an infant, dying in infancy, is saved without these fruits and evidences. Elected by the Father, atoned for by the Son, and regenerated by the Spirit, the infant, equally with the adult, in heaven, can ascribe the praises of its salvation to the Triune God.

3. What is the evidence, or proof, that the dead infant was saved? Faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience prove that the adult was saved; what shows that the infant was thus a subject of redeeming grace? Our Calvinism answers, that its death is the certificate of its redemption.

Unconditional election by the Father conveys to the infant the right to eternal life; atonement by the Son takes away the guilt of original sin, and conveys legal fitness for eternal life; and regeneration by the Spirit changes its subjective moral nature, conveys to the child a heart for the enjoyment of eternal life; and death is the visible seal and the divine certification that it was elect, a beneficiary of

the Saviour's cross, and a subject of the Spirit's gracious operation.

And so in heavenly glory, it will, coequally with its ransomed parents, mingle its infant voice in the song of Moses and of the Lamb, in making its ascription of praise to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XIII.

Elect Infants.

Since the close of the Apostolic period, approximately one hundred creeds have been formulated and promulgated, by different parties, as satisfactory reductions of the doctrines of Sacred Scripture.

Some of these creeds are very brief and general, while others are elaborate formulations of Christian doctrine. They may be distributed as, (1) the Major, and (2) the Minor, Creeds of Christendom.

But adopting the divisions of the Church as the principle of distribution, these creeds are classified as follows: (1) the Œcumenical Creeds, or those which were promulgated prior to any organic division in the Church; (2) the Roman Creeds, or those of the Western division of the Church; (3) the Greek Creeds, or those of the Eastern and Russian division of the Church; (4) the Protestant Ceeeds, or those which were formulated in that portion of Christendom, which protested against the teachings and practices of the Western and Eastern divisions.

It will be interesting to trace what these Creeds of Cristendom show on the subject of Infant Salvation, and find the origin of the famous "elect infant" clause of the Westminster Symbol.

I. Of the Œcumenical Creeds—the creeds which are common to all parties in Christendom—the *Apostles'* and the *Nicene* are the chiefest and most important formulations of the Undivided Church. The Apostles' Creed was begun by Irenæus in A. D. 200, and completed by Pirminius in A. D. 750. The Nicene Creed was begun in A. D. 325, and completed in A. D. 381. These Œcumenical Creeds are *silent* on the subject of infant salvation. The undivided Church made no credal deliverance of any kind on this topic.

II. The two major Roman Catholic Creeds are *The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent* (1563), and *The Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council* (1870). Of these two, the later Vatican Creed is *silent* on the subject of infant salvation; but the former, or Tridentine Creed, makes the following pronouncement on this topic, and gives to us the credal doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church on this whole subject:

"If any one denies that the said merit of Jesus Christ is applied, both to adults and to infants, by the sacrament of baptism rightly administered in the form of the Church: let him be anathema."—*Fifth Session, 3.*

"If any one saith, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary unto salvation: let him be anathema."—*Seventh Session, Can. V.*

"Forasmuch as, having been regenerated by the laver of baptism, and being incorporated with Christ, they (infants) cannot, at that age, lose the grace which they have already acquired of being the sons of God."—*Twenty-first Session, Chap. IV.*

This great Roman Catholic Creed, formulated as Rome's reply to the Protestant Reformation, grounds the salvation of the infant in its baptism by the Roman Catholic Church; it is only through that baptism that the merits of Christ can be applied to any person, adult or infant; consequently, if any child

dies without Romish baptism, it cannot have an admission into heaven with the baptized children of the Church. But neither would it be damnable, because this Tridentine formulary explicitly declares, that the death of Christ took away the guilt of original sin from all the children of Adam: hence the unbaptized dead baby is fit for neither heaven nor hell; and the Romish theologians have been constrained to provide, in the disembodied world, a special compartment for this class of departed persons—the *limbus infantum,* a border which is neither heavenly in its happiness, nor hell in its miserableness.

III. The two major creeds of the Greek and Russian Catholic Church are *The Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church* (1643), and *The Eighteen Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem* (1672). Of these two great historic formularies of Chistrian doctrine, the former is *silent* on the subject of infant baptism, and the latter makes this deliverance:

"We believe that holy baptism, certainly instituted by God and administered in the name of the holy Trinity, is summarily necessary. For without it no one can be saved according to the teaching of the Lord: Except a man be born of water and of the Holy Spirit, he shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore it is necessary for little children also, as those who are free in the matter of original sin cannot be cleansed without baptism. Because the teaching Lord has said not only about certain persons but also plainly about all men: Except a man be born, etc. Which item is as if he had said, that all persons who would enter into the kingdom of heaven at the coming of Christ the Saviour must be regenerated. If there are little children, any one of them without salvation, they are also without baptism; and those who die unregenerated, even as those who have not received the remission of original sin, are necessarily cast into eternal punishment and consequently are not at all salvable without baptism: wherefore it is necessary that little children be bap-

tized. Moreover concerning the salvation of little children it follows, as it is taught in Matthew: But he that is not baptized is not saved. Therefore it is necessary that little children be baptized."—*Decree XVI.*

This document does not leave it to be inferred what would become of unbaptized infants dying in their infancy: it does not invoke the aid of some imaginary *limbus infantum* to relieve the gloom of its sacramentarian premises; it has the courage of its logic, and plainly consigns all unbaptized persons, whether infant or adult, to eternal punishment. Having laid down the doctrine that the sacraments are essential to salvation, the Greek or Eastern Catholic does not flinch at the consequences which must flow from his initial principle, but plainly avows the result in formal credal affirmation—whoever and whatever is not baptized is finally lost.

IV. The Evangelical Protestant Creeds are distributed into three classes, according to the types of doctrine they respectively set forth: (1) Lutheran, (2) Reformed or Calvinistic, and (3) Arminian.

1. Of the Evangelical Lutheran Creeds the principal ones are: *Luther's Catechism* (1529), *The Augsburg Confession* (1530), and *The Formula of Concord* (1576). Each of these formulas is blemished by the taint of the old Greek and Roman sacramentarianism, and lays the foundations of infant salvation in baptism. Indeed, it was upon the subject of the sacraments, that Protestantism first split into the Lutheran and Reformed parties—the party, under the influence and leadership of Luther, failing to reform, and eliminate the old sacramentarian theory of salvation, which had brought the Church to such utter desolation.

"It (Baptism) worketh forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlast-

ing salvation to all who believe, as the Word and the promise of God declare."—*Cat., Part IV., ii.*

"Of Baptism they (Lutherans) teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that by Baptism the grace of God is offered, and that children are to be baptized, who by Baptism, being offered to God, are received into God's favour. They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the Baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without Baptism." —*Augs. Conf., Part I., Art. IX.*

The *Formula of Concord*, in condemning the Anabaptist articles, condemned the following as false:

"That infants not baptized are not sinners before God, but just and innocent, and in this their innocence, when they have not as yet the use of reason, may, without baptism . . attain unto salvation." —*Art. XII., iv.*

In a formal condemnation of "the false and erroneous doctrine of Calvinists," the *Saxon Visitation Articles* (1592) pronounced as false the following:

"That salvation doth not depend on Baptism, and therefore in cases of necessity should not be required in the Church; but when the ordinary minister of the Church is wanting, the infant should be permitted to die without Baptism."—*Art. IV. v.*

It will be seen from these quotations from the Lutheran Creeds, that Lutheranism clings to the old theory, and posits the possible salvation of dead infants in their baptism. While these Symbols do not explicitly declare the fate of the child that dies unbaptized, the implication is obvious. The quarrel between the Lutherans and the Calvinists was due to just this divergence of view—the former clung to a modified sacramentarianism, while the latter abjured it utterly, pronouncing the sacraments to be means of grace, but denying that they were essential

to salvation in the case of either infant or adult. For denying that baptism was necessary for salvation, the Lutherans condemned the Calvinists.

2. The Arminian group of creeds are *silent* on the subject of infant salvation. The chief Arminian creeds are *The Five Arminian Articles* (1610), promulgated by the Dutch Remonstrants, and the *Methodist Articles of Religion* (1784), an abridgement of the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England, made by John Wesley. They make no deliverance whatever upon the fate of children dying in infancy; but they certify, over and over, that whoever becomes a beneficiary of Christ must be a conscious, free, rational, and intelligent believer in Christ: but no infant is capable of believing. Arminians repudiate the plain inference; but Dr. Curtis, a distinguished Methodist Professor, says, "I now remember only one Arminian theologian who seriously tries to say a consistent word concerning this difficult matter." It is, nevertheless, true that many of the bitterest complaints against Calvinistic doctrine on this subject have eminated from Arminian sources, whose creeds are silent, and whose theologians have hardly said "a consistent word on this difficult matter."

3. There are in all over thirty Reformed and Calvinistic Creeds. But many of these never had more than local authority, and they have all been superseded by three later and maturer and predominating forms. These larger and more authoritative Calvinistic Symbols are: (1) *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (1563); (2) *The Canons of the Synod of Dort* (1619); (3) *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647). All these Reformed Creeds departed widely from that ecclesiastical traditionalism, which made baptism essential to salvation, and introduced a new and different soteriological formula, namely, (a) election by the

Father, (b) atonement by the Son, and (c) vocation by the Spirit.

In all this schedule of grace, man is construed as a patient being acted upon, and not as an agent acting; consequently, an infant is just as salvable as an adult. These Reformed Confessions have found, and presented, an entirely new, and different, basis for the salvation of children from any heretofore promulgated; repudiating traditional sacramentarianism, they offer the electing love of the Father, the saving blood of Jesus, and the regeneration and sanctification of the Holy Spirit, as the basis upon which to rest the salvation of all, whether infant or adult. In several of these Reformed Creeds, there is a decided hint at the mode of infant salvation, but it gradually emerged in this group of creeds until it was at last fully declared in the Westminster Symbol.

The *Thirty-Nine Articles*, which is the official creed of the Episcopal Church of England and America, are *silent* on the subject of infant salvation, except as its XXVII Article may be tinctured with the old sacramentarianism.

But the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*, which are the standard of faith for continental Calvinists, make this pronouncement in Art. XVII:

"Since we are to judge of the will of God from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they together with the parents are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy."

The parent desires some proof of the "election" of his child, who is called out of this life in infancy: the Synod of Dort pointed such a parent to "the covenant of grace," which "comprehends" both

parents and their children. But what about the child of ungodly parents, called out of this life in infancy? The Synod of Dort says nothing: it knows nothing to which it can point an ungodly father for comfort in the loss of his child; and would it be saying too much to say, that such a Christless parent is entitled to no comforting assurance concerning the fate of his child? Repudiating his God and Maker, he is not entitled to know any thing about the fate of his offspring, when the angel of death invades his home. But these Canons do not assert the damnation of any child, even of heathen parents: they go no further than to assert the fact, that the godly parent and his child being bundled together by grace, proves the blessed fate of the dead infant.

But the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, more maligned than any other creed, and more admired and loved by its adherents than any other formulary of Christian doctrine, makes the fullest and clearest statement of the doctrine of infant salvation of all the creeds in wide Christendom:

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."—*Chap. X. iii.*

In 1658, the Congregational Churches of England modified the Westminster Confession to suit the Congregational polity, and as modified promulgated it as their Confession of Faith. The "elect infant" clause was in no way changed by the Congregationalists.

In 1688, the Baptists revised the Westminster Confession to suit their views on Church polity and the mode of baptism, and proclaimed it as their creed. It was thus adopted by the Baptists of Eng-

land and the United States, as far as Congregational bodies are able to make any creed common to Churches, which have no organic connection with each other. But the "elect infant" clause was not changed by the Baptists.

In 1813, the Cumberland Presbyterians revised the Westminster Confession to suit their theological views, and, for the first time in its history, the "elect infant" clause was changed, and as follows:

"*All* infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth; so also are others *who have never had the exercise of reason*, and who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word."

In 1883, the Cumberland Presbyterians again revised the Westminster Confession of Faith, more radically than ever before, and this time changed the "elect infant" clause as follows:

"All infants dying in infancy, and all persons who have never had the faculty of reason, are regenerated and saved."

In 1903, the Northern Presbyterian Church revised the Westminster Confession, and appended a foot-note to the "elect infant" clause, as follows:

"With reference to Chapter X., Section 3, of the Confession of Faith, that it is not to be regarded as teaching that any who die in infancy are lost. We believe that all dying in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how he pleases."

Upon the completion of this revision, the Cumberland Presbyterians made overtures to the Northern Presbyterians for the organic union of the two Churches, and these overtures were accepted by the Northern Church.

The Southern Presbyterian Church, though repeatedly solicited to modify the famous "elect infant" clause of the Westminster Confession, has persistently declined to accede to any of these overtures.

In 1900, its General Assembly declined to make any change,

"inasmuch as the present language of the Confession cannot, by any fair interpretation, be construed to teach that any of those who die in infancy are lost."—*Minutes, p. 614.*

In 1901, the General Assembly of the Southern Church made an extended deliverance of its reasons for not modifying this clause, as follows:

"1. Because it is unwise to initiate at this time the agitation of this question among our people.

2. Because no modification that does not eliminate the Scriptural Calvinism from this section of the Confession will obviate the objections which come from Arminian sources.

3. Because the Westminster Confession of Faith is the first Great Creed which taught the salvation of infants dying in infancy, on truly Scriptural grounds.

4. Because the Confession of Faith in this section does not teach the damnation of any infants dying in infancy for the reason that the contrast made in it is not between elect and non-elect infants dying in infancy, but between elect persons who die in infancy and elect persons who do not die in infancy.

5. Because while we have a well-grounded hope, founded on Scripture, that all infants dying in infancy are saved, yet the Confession of Faith goes as far as the Scriptures justify a positive credal statement on the subject."—*Minutes, p. 59.*

In 1902, the General Assembly of this Church again made a deliverance on the subject, as follows:

"This Assembly is fully pursuaded that the language employed in Chap. X., Sec. 3, of our Confession of Faith, touching infants dying in infancy, does not

teach that there are any infants dying in infancy who are damned, but is only meant to show that those who die in infancy are saved in a different manner from adult persons, who are capable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. Furthermore, we are pursuaded that the Holy Scriptures, when fairly interpreted, amply warrant us in believing that all infants who die in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit."—*Minutes, p. 265.*

Upon the subject of the salvation of infants dying in infancy, the following is a fair exhibit of the teachings of the Creeds of Christendom: (1) The Œcumenical Creeds make no deliverance of any kind upon the subject; (2) the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic, and the Lutheran Creeds condition the salvation of children upon their having received water-baptism, and some of this group distinctly assert the actual damnation of those infants, idiots, and moral incompetents, who pass out of this world, not having received this ecclesiastical ordinance; (3) the Arminian Creeds are absolutely silent upon the subject, making no sort of deliverance whatsoever; but everywhere asserting, that actual salvation is invariably conditioned upon conscious faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience, which saving acts all infants, idiots, and incapables are unable, by the very nature of the case, to perform; (4) the Calvinistic Creeds, repudiating the traditional sacramentarianism, which for centuries bound the mind of the entire Church, and denying that actual salvation is conditioned upon human acts and actions, predicate, as the mode of salvation, election by the love of the Father, atonement by the death of the Son, and regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit; and find the salvation of infants, idiots, and all moral incompetents possible; and, upon this Scriptural premise, declare that all, who perish in

this irresponsible state, are saved in this mode. Of all the Calvinistic Creeds, the Westminster Symbol goes farther, says more, and says it more clearly than does any other Creed in all Christendom.

But upon the celebrated and much litigated "elect infant" passage of the Westminster Confession, there are three general opinions: (1) all anti-Calvinists assail it as grossly incorrect in fact, and fiercely arraign it as implicating that some non-elect infants die in infancy, and finally perish; (2) some of the adherents of this Westminster formulary criticise this passage as seriously deficient, and charge that it stands in need of amendment, in order that it may express the whole truth on this subject; (3) other adherents of this symbol of Christian faith think, that this passage goes as far as the Scriptures warrant in a positive credal statement on this subject, and delivers the truth with fulness and exactitude. Let us review briefly these three attitudes towards the "elect infant" clause of this Confession.

The following is the "elect infant clause," segregated from its context:

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth."

I. The critics of Calvinism are fond of charging that this confessional statement about the salvation of "elect infants dying in infancy" implicates the proposition, that *non-elect infants dying in infancy are lost.* Having obtained this inference, the critics go a step further, and infer that *this Calvinistic formulary teaches that some non-elect infants actually do die in infancy and perish.* Having made this inference, they announce a great conclusion, *that Calvinism teaches, in its official creed, that there are infants in hell not a span long.* All these shocking things they deduce from

the confessional text, by playing upon the phraseology of this great document.

1. As an instalment of the reply to this criticism, let it be emphasized that all that the complainants allege, is based upon their own *inference*. It is they, who read into the Confession; they, who put this interpretation upon this document. The text of the document nowhere, from beginning to end, asserts that any non-elect infants die in infancy. It makes its entire predication about "elect infants dying in infancy:" it is absolutely silent everywhere about non-elect infants, saying neither one thing nor another about this class of persons. The basis of this criticism is an inference from the form of words employed by the Confession.

2. It is *not a necessary* inference. This is the second instalment of answer to this criticism. If the inference were logical and necessary, then it could be truthfully alleged, that the Confession teaches the doctrine of the damnation of some infants dying in infancy, not directly, but by implication. To make one predication about one class, does not necessarily imply the reverse predication about the opposite class. If I should say, "All white children dying in infancy are decently buried," what predication would I have made about negro children dying in infancy? Absolutely none. I would not have said that there were any negro children; I would not have said that any negro children do die; I would not have said that any negro child was not decently interred: I would have said nothing about this class of persons at all. If I say, "Elect infants dying in infancy are saved," what would I have said about "non-elect infants dying in infancy?" Absolutely nothing. I would not have said that any non-elect infants die in infancy; I would not have said that any non-elect infants are lost: I have said nothing whatsoever about this class of persons.

3. This inference of the criticism is *illegitimate*. This is the third instalment of the defence. The context distinctly prohibits any inference whatsoever about non-elect infants. The subject of the chapter, in which the "elect infrnt" clause occurs, is "Effectual Calling," and treats of the *way*, in which the gospel is savingly applied to "all those whom God hath predestinated unto life." All these persons are saved by the vocation of "his word and Spirit," by "enlightening their minds," by "renewing their wills," by "effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ." Then, what is the method of saving those persons who cannot comprehend the gospel, and accede to its demands, because they are infants, or idiots, or incapables? The Confession must answer this question, or imitate most of the uncalvinistic creeds, and say "not one consistent word on this difficult subject." The Confession does not evade the question, but presents an answer out of the Scriptures: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through his Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." How are "all those whom God hath predestined unto life" actually saved? This is the Confession's question in this tenth chapter. In making answer, it sticks to the question, and replies, "By the outward call through the ministry of the word." Then the further question, "How can they be saved who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word?" The Confession answers, "Elect infants, and elect idiots, and elect incapables of every other kind, are saved by Christ through the Spirit." The whole context requires the Confession to speak to the case of the salvation of adults and infants. It would therefore be a gross violation of the coxtext, to represent the Confession

as speaking, by implication, to the case of any non-elect infants. It here makes no predication concerning them; it intended to make no predication; it would have been off the subject had it done so; the inference, that the Confession, by necessary implication, here teaches the damnation of any non-elect infant dying in infancy, is illegitimate, for the document does not say that any such persons ever die in infancy, nor make any sort of predication concerning them whatsoever.

4. But it will be said, that the inference, that the Westminster Confession teaches the doctrine of the damnation of non-elect infants dying in infancy, is warranted by the fact that Augustine, Calvin, Twisse (the Moderator of the Westminster Assembly), Edwards, and other eminent expositors of Calvinism held, and taught, the damnation of at least some dead infants.

Let it be granted that many infelicities of expression on this subject have been made in the past, and that even some passages, isolated from their larger context, may be made to mean the damnation of some dead infants, a sweeping view of the history of doctrine will greatly modify this general accusation.

Early in the Church's history, the accent came to be thrown upon the sacraments as the means of connecting the soul with the benefits of Christ's atonement. The emphasis grew stronger and stronger upon these ordinances, until the Church apostatized from the truth altogether, and was carried under the eclipse of the dark ages. So deeply had this sacramentarianism tinctured the mind of Augustine, that he could not see how unbaptized children could be saved, and seems to have made some fatal admissions concerning such children. Indeed, if sacramentarianism be true, it remains to this day impossible to explain the salva-

tion of unbaptized children upon its premises. Calvin's mission was to indoctrinate the Reformation, and give to it a theology which could support it in all its conflicts, and make it enduring; and it remains true to this day that his theology is the backbone of the Protestant Reformation. But in performing his task, the great Genevan had to free his own mind of the baleful influences of sacramentarianism on the one hand, and conduct many controversies, having it as his object to recover and replant the lost doctrine of the damnability of original sin. In waging these fierce contests, he strenuously asserted the fact, and the damnability, of original sin, and did not always say just the thing, which would differentiate his distinction between the *damnability* of the child, on account of its original inheritances from Adam, and the actual *damnation* of the child dying in infancy. There is much in his writings that his critics can seize upon in order to show him an offender; but the controversies which he had, must always be taken into consideration as the context of each statement, which he made on this subject; he vigorously denied the age-long and traditional theory, that the sacrament of baptism was the practical connective between Christ and the sinner; and, having denied the traditionalism of his day, he was not always prepared to show, in the heat of controversy, where fundamental truth was at stake, just how the new, the Reformation, conception of the gospel plan was applicable to dead children.

We are indebted to Calvin for exploding the doctrine that children are saved by baptism. Let us admit that he did not at all times state just how they were saved, and did not always guard his statements about them, when contending, as for life and death, for the proposition that the fall of Adam rendered the race justly damnable. He said things sometimes

which can be interpreted, by those so minded, to mean, that he held that some infants were lost; but it is undeniable that he did, in his commentary on the gospels, grasp the fact, and splendidly say it, in his comment on the "Suffer little children" saying of our Lord.

The history of doctrine shows the theological world, for long centuries, trying to come to the truth on this subject with sacramentarianism as its working hypothesis. It was the Westminster Assembly, working with the new soteriological concepts of Calvin and the Reformation, which saw, for the first time, and expressed the conviction, that infants are elect as well as adults, and salvable through the unconditional application to them of the atonement of Christ and the regeneration of the Spirit. It was the Calvinistic concept of soteriology, which eventually found a consistent basis for the Church's faith in the salvation of infants dying in infancy. Hence the history of Calvinism does not warrant the inference, that the Confession teaches the damnation of some dead babies.

The strongest single passage, most frequently adduced from the writings of Calvin, to prove that he held and taught the doctrine of infant damnation, is the following:

"I inquire again, how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God."—*Institutes, Bk. III., Chap. XXIII., Sec. VII.*

Upon this famous utterance of the great Genevan, which has made him the subject of the austerest criticism, I remark:

(1) It is literally and biblically true. The fall of Adam did bring "nations with their infant children into eternal death." "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed

upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). "As in Adam all die" (I Cor. xv. 22). It is an old theological dogma, not held by Calvinists alone, that all died when Adam died. The human race was in him, and sinned in him, and fell with him. Of course, then, the "nations with their infant children" passed under the divine death-sentence, when the judgment of condemnation was passed upon Adam and his posterity. Calvin here asserted the fall of mankind, and mankind included children as well as adults. The fall was all-inclusive of the human race.

(2) But Calvin does not say here, nor elsewhere, that this death-sentence was *executed* upon the "nations and their infant children." The distinction, between imposing the death-sentence and executing that sentence, is perfectly obvions. Before Calvin can fairly be made to say, in this place, that any infants were actually damned, he must be made to say what he does not say, namely, that this sentence of eternal death, passed upon the "nations with their infant children," was *executed* as it was passed. He distinctly taught that some persons, whom he called the "elect," were never actually consigned to hell. All were worthy of death: all were sentenced to eternal death: but a remedy was provided by Christ, through the Spirit, whereby a multitude were saved from eternal death. There is much in his writings, which proves that he held to the *damnability* of all nations and their infant children: much to prove, that he held, that a *judgment of condemnation* was *passed* by God upon all nations and their infant children: but there is not a scrap to show, that he held, that this universal sentence of death was *executed* upon all nations with their infant children. This distinction is the one which is so lamentably, and obtusely, overlooked by his harsh censors.

(3) And what passed this sentence of eternal death upon the "nations with their infant children ?"' In the context of the passage, Calvin constructs an alternative answer to this question: (a) either it was the result of nature, or (b) it was a judicial decree of God. Either the moral death which enveloped the race was a natural consequence of the operation of nature's laws, or it was a consequence of an action of God: the eternal death which had come upon all men was natural, or it was a divine infliction. "This," he says in the immediate context, "not being attributable to nature, must have proceeded from the wonderful counsel of God." In other words, he denies that the moral ruin of the race, "nations with their infant children," was a natural sequence from the operations of the ordained course of the universe, and affirms that it came by the "will of God." We must all, with him, make our choice, and hold hell to be a *natural sequence* of life, or a *penalty* inflicted by the will of God. Who can hesitate upon his decision ?

(4) Calvin was in debate, and wrote this passage from a point of view which was defined for him by the controversy. He was refuting, he says, "the calumnies generally, but unjustly, urged against" the doctrine of predestination. The specific criticism to which he was replying, when he wrote the sentence about the "nations and their infant children" quoted above, he stated in this language: "They maintain, that he (Adam) was possessed of free choice, that he might be the author of his own fate, but that God decreed nothing more than to treat him according to his desert." That is, his opponents in the debate took the ground that the will of Adam conditioned and determined the will of God: Calvin is replying to the doctrine of "conditional predestination," to use the phraseology of the present day. He answers it by asking, How could the fall of Adam

involve so many "nations with their infant children," upon the hypothesis that the human will determines the divine will? How could these infant children, by the free choice of their will, determine their fate in eternal death? It was something which could "not have happened by nature," and which consequently must have happened "by the will of God." Who included the infant children under the curse of Adam? It could not have been their wills: therefore it must have been God's will. He does not, therefore, assert here that any infant children are actually damned: he is arguing, from the *damnability* of infant children, to the conclusion that it was the divine decree that involved them with Adam in the fall, and not some natural action of their own: they are instances in which the human and individual will could not have determined the moral situation. The polemical setting of the passage, delivers the author from the harsh charge brought against him on the strength of this famous sentence. The "nations and their infant children" are involved in the fall of Adam: how, asks Calvin, could they have involved themselves by their own act? To affirm it is to be absurd: therefore they were involved in the fall of Adam by the will of God—by his individual decree.

The long reign of sacramentarianism, supported and propagated by the politico-ecclesiastical organization which had its seat in the Vatican palace at Rome, had eventually brought about the total theological eclipse of the Dark Ages, and the abject apostacy of the Church: the Protestant Reformation became an imperative necessity, to prevent the utter extinction of Christianity from the face of the earth. But to effect such a Reformation, there was needed first of all a *breaker*—some spirit with the courage and the strength, with the temerity and the power, to defy tyrannous ecclesiastics, and shiver the exist-

ing order of things, and bring about such a religious chaos as would necessitate a radical reconstruction of religious doctrines, policies, and ideals: divine providence raised up the mighty and dauntless Luther to perform this breaker's office. But for this Reformation to be effective, it must not only be destructive; it must be constructive also: a Scriptural theology must be rescued from under the smothering debris of error, clarified, and republished: and divine providence raised up John Calvin to indoctrinate the Reformation, and give back to the Church a biblical conception of the scheme of salvation. It was in itself a herculean task, but it had also to be performed by one who stood to the traditional orthodoxy of the time as a heretic, and against whom all the ecclesiastics confederated for his hurt, and for his destruction. Himself bred in the bosom of the apostate Church, and designed for its ministry, can it be wondered at that the great theologian of the Reformation failed to purge every blemish from every point of doctrine, and state every dogma of the Reformed faith in terms which should exactly and fully express his own mind, and satisfy Protestant Christians in their calmest and most peaceful moods? Does not the law of simple fairness, to say nothing of the principle of charity, require his critics to attribute some things, to which they object, to the infelicities of expression, which were forced by the strenuous times in which he wrote and struggled? Calvin's friends are zealous to rescue his great name from the aspersions, which have been cast upon this princely theologian of the Reformation, and their proposition in his defence is as follows:

The immediate context, and the larger context of the times and the controversies which raged about him, clear him truly from the charge of having taught the damnation of any dead infants.

Whether such a vindication be regarded as rational and complete, or as the lame and special apology of an admirer and friend; it is nevertheless true, that it was the great Genevan who brought to light the truth, that such infants as are saved, are saved not by water-baptism and sacramentarian charms, but by the election of the Father, the atonement of the Son, and the regeneration and sanctification of the Spirit. It is also true that it is the disciples of John Calvin, who have made the only credal statement, which renders the salvation of dead infants, in a biblical mode, possible. It does not appropriately lie in the mouth of sacramentarians, to charge Calvinists with holding the doctrine of infant damnation, seeing that their scheme insures the damnation of such children as die unbaptized; nor does it gracefully appertain to Arminians to critizise the Calvinists upon this point, seeing that their creeds are absolutely speechless on the subject, and only "one of its theologians have tried to speak a consistent word on this difficult matter."

II. The Westminster deliverance is held, by some of its adherents, to be *deficient* in the statement of doctrine on the subject of the salvation of infants, dying in infancy. These think there is need of an amendment, correcting this omission. In their opinion, this Creed ought to declare, in express terms, that all infants dying in infancy are elect. The Cumberland Presbyterians changed the text of the Confession so as to make it affirm this broad fact; and the Northern Presbyterians have appended a declaratory foot-note to the same effect. The Southern Presbyterians have repeatedly delivered their opinion on the subject in language of similar import, while this Presbyterian body has not altered the text of the Confession, nor added any foot-note to the document.

The question here is not as to the doctrine itself: all parties are agreed that all infants and idiots and

incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency, are actually elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Spirit. All Calvinists are agreed upon the fact, and also as to the ground of the fact. But the question is: *Does the Confession of Faith need amendment upon this point?*

In their creed-making, Calvinists are regulated by an iron-clad rule, namely: *Nothing is to be introduced into the formal and official statement of doctrine, except what is deducible from Scripture by fair and legitimate exegesis.*

1. The application of this rule requires the creed-maker to refer, in every instance, to the passage, or passages, in the Scriptures which, by fair and legitimate exegesis, yield every item of doctrine which he formally announces. It binds upon him the proof-text method of forming symbols of faith and standards of belief. The whole doctrine announced, and each element in the whole, must have the text, or texts, pointed out, which contain what is set forth as an article of the creed. If he misses the real meaning of the text, he must at least make an honest pretense of deducing the article from the text of Scripture, and show where the passage relied upon is to be found. The Calvinistic creeds are, therefore, first biblical and exegetical, and then dogmatic because they are biblical and exegetical.

2. This rule denies to the Calvinist the right, and the privilege, of incorporating into his creed any of his inferences from the doctrines, which he has derived by exegesis from Scripture. Whatever "by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture," is of equal authority and value with that which is explicitly asserted in Scriptures: but inasmuch as Calvinists hold that all synods and councils "may err, and many have erred," their *inferences* from Scripture, however plausible, and however true they may be, are yet not to be bound

upon the faith of God's people with ecclesiastical authority, because the freedom of the human conscience is too sacred for any risk to be run in taking for commandments of God the inductions of men. The Church has been caused to groan too frequently and too bitterly, both in biblical and post-biblical times, by ecclesiastical authorities becoming cocksure that they had an inerrant inference from the Word, which justified their binding for Scripture truth what proved to be but a tradition of fallible men. "God alone is the Lord of the conscience," says the Confession; it is too risky to bind any human inferences upon it, however obvious they may appear to be. "Nothing, therefore," says the Confession, "ought to be considered by any court as an offence, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from the Scripture, as interpreted in these standards." Nothing is to be admitted into the standards of faith, except what good and necessary *exegesis* will derive from the text of Scripture; and nothing is to be construed as an "offence" or matter of "accusation," except what is exhibited as such by the Scriptures as interpreted in the standards. Thus is the liberty of faith and conscience and conduct safely protected, first by the Scriptures themselves, and second by the standards. Could mortal man ask for a larger or a truer liberty, than that which is vouchsafed and protected in the Presbyterian standards?

3. It follows from the Reformed rule of creed-making, that there is a wide and substantial difference between a *creed* and a *theology*. A creed contains only the doctrines, which are derived from Scripture by exegesis and interpretation, and reduced to formal and exact statement; a theology contains all the inductions and inferences, which the theologian feels justified in drawing from the propositions, which have been enounced in the creed. Creeds are

exegetical in their genesis; theology is *inferential* in its formation. Creeds are grammatical deductions; theologies are logical formations. Creeds are narrower in contents than theology; they embrace only such truths as are *explicitly* set forth in Scripture; theology incorporates also those things which are *implicitly* contained in Scripture, and deducible from it by good and necessary consequence. The theology of any given denomination is larger than the creed of that denomination. Creeds are binding upon the faith of their adherents; theology is never thus obligatory. If I deny my creed, I am, *quoad hoc,* heretical and disloyal to my denomination; but if I deny my theology, while I may deny the truth in so doing, yet I am not faithless to my Church, unless in denying my theology I, in the same matter, deny my Church's creed. Creeds are the *explicates* of Scripture, as interpreted by any given denomination or party; theology systematizes the *implicates* of divine truth. The Bible is the text; the creed is the summation of the text; the theology is the elaboration of the summary. Nothing is infallible except the text—the Bible.

The Calvinist has not stated his whole theology in his creed: he believes his creed, but he believes more than is explicitly in his creed; he believes all those consequences which are necessarily deducible from his creed, and the fundamental teachings of Scripture as expressed in his creed. I go further: the Calvinist, nor any other, ought to attempt to make his entire theology a creed, to be inculcated and enforced upon his fellow-disciples as possessing the binding character of divine truth: he is always liable to err in the involutions and evolutions of his reasoning and development. He, and all others, ought to have a theology for *didactic* purposes; and he ought to have a creed for *mandatory* purposes. His creed ought to be his theology condensed; his

theology ought to be his creed expanded. The argument is frequently fallaciously made, that the Calvinist ought to incorporate, into his official standard, all the things which his denomination holds to be true. This is the same as saying that creed and theology ought to be equivalent, and that inferences and logical implicates ought to be set up in the creed, and bound on the consciences of adherents.

For this reason, Calvinists, while believing that all infants and incapables, living and dying in moral incompetency, are translated to heavenly glory when they are removed from this world, have declined to set up this proposition in their formal and authoritative creed; it would lead them to violate their safe, sane rule, that nothing ought to be put into the formal creed, which is not fairly and legitimately deducible, not from some antecedent conclusions in theology or soteriology, but from the Scriptures themselves directly; for as soon as a tenet becomes one degree removed from the text of Scripture, it is not admissible to a place in the creed, though it may be absolutely true.

Because of the operation of this rule of creed-making, the Westminster Assembly could go no further upon the subject of infant salvation than this famous and litigated pronouncement: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word."

The foregoing reasoning in this discussion has been to show, that the foundations of the belief in the doctrine of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy are *theological*, rather than *exegetical*. To incorporate in the creed the statement that "all infants who die in infancy are elect," would be to

state the truth, but it would be an *inferential* truth, and not a direct exposition of Scripture. Creed-making ought to be rigorously guarded, and made under the strictest construction of the rule, that nothing is to be bound upon the people of God except the things yielded by a direct interpretation of the Scripture. As soon as a conclusion gets removed the first degree from the biblical text, it ought to be set down as not available for the *creed:* any other rule, or any lax application of this rule, exposes God's people to the traditions of men, which has caused the blood of the pious to flow in the past. Our only safety is in adhering to the rule, however much our desires to incorporate some inferences, which seem to us so very true, may be moved.

The proposition is true, that all infants dying in infancy are elect infants, but it is a result of reasoning upon biblical data, and is an inference of the fallible human mind, and no direct and immediate quotations from Scripture can be made in its support, fairly and indisputably yielding the proposition: therefore, while it is true, it is not available for credal incorporation. The thing which goes into an official creed ought to win its way in the field of exegesis and biblical interpretation. The things which go into theology, on the other hand, may legitimately be the inductions and deductions and inferences and conclusions reached by logical and rational processes from Scripture data.

Observing this rule, I think the Westminster Assembly went as far, as immediate and certain Scripture, warranted: to go further, would be to introduce human theology into the creed of the Church.

III. It is the opinion of a large number of Calvinists that the "elect infant" clause, as originally formulated by the Westminster Assembly, is true and exact, and needs no modification of its text, nor explanatory foot-note.

In order to vindicate this view, I quote the whole of the famous Tenth Chapter on *Effectual Calling*, as follows:

"I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess, and to assert and maintain that they may is a very pernicious error, and to be detested."

Analyzing this chapter of the Confession, we have the following propositions:

(1) A definition of all *salvable persons*: "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only." All men being sinners, have forfeited all

right and *title* to the favor of God and the blessings of eternal life: the primary desideratum for such sinful persons is the *right* to be saved—the right to participate in the merits of Christ: divine election conveys that *right*. All those, and those only, who are nominated by the Father are entitled to share in the benefits of Christ's redemption, and in the vocation of the Holy Spirit. In order for any citizen to have a legal title to the office of President of the United States, he must first be elected thereto by the sovereign voters; but in order for him to enter upon the conscious exercise of the privileges and prerogatives of that high office, he must be inaugurated therein: election conveys title; inauguration puts into possession and exercise. In some analogous way, for any disinherited and discharged sinner to partake of the saving blessings of the gospel, he must be elected thereto by the Sovereign Elector, who is God; but in order for him to actually and consciously enjoy the privileges of this election, he must be introduced thereinto by the conversion of the Holy Spirit.

(2) This chapter next defines the *mode* in which all those predestinated, and nominated, unto eternal life come into the actual enjoyment of their heavenly privileges: "effectually called by his word and Spirit." This programme of effectuating the introduction of the elect into the privileges and blessings, unto which they were chosen, is elaborately set forth in the first and second sections of this tenth chapter. They are so called, that "they come most freely;" they are "altogether passive," but they are so quickened by the Spirit, that they "answer this call, and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." *Provided*, they are capable; that is, adults of sound mind.

(3) But suppose they are *incapables*, like infants which die in infancy, and idiots and mental incompe-

tents? Though incapable of obeying the outward call of the word, yet such incompetents, being elect are entitled to eternal life, and they will not be cheated of the benefits of the atonement of Christ, and the regenerating grace of the Spirit: they shall surely, according to the Confession, come into the enjoyment of all those gracious rights which were conferred upon them in their election.

(4) In order for infants to be beneficiaries of salvation in this mode, that is, without the outward ministry of the word, two things must be predicable of them: (a) "elect," (b) "dying in infancy." But why say that infants, to be the beneficiaries of the atonement of Christ and of the vocation of the Spirit, must be "elect?" Because only "elect" persons are salvable. But why say they must die in infancy? Because only dead infants are moral incompetents: if they live, they will come to moral discretion and responsibility, and must obtain eternal life in the ordinary mode, that is, by the outward ministry of the word.

(5) This chapter defines the *persons who are finally lost:* "Others, not elect . . who never come to Christ." This is a description of the entire class of persons who are lost according to this Confession —those persons who "never truly come to Christ." The very terminology—"never come"—excludes infants who die in infancy: they are classified as moral incompetents, and their salvation is provided for by the Confession, and they are consequently not included in the "others," descriptive of those who are not saved. Two things, according to the Confession, must concur, at the same time and upon the same person, to insure his final damnation, namely, (a) non-election, (b) non-coming to Christ: both are the concurrent predicates of the lost.

(6) This chapter then deals with three classes of persons: (a) capable adults who "answer the call,"

(b) dead infants and moral defectives, "who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word," and (c) those capable adults, who "never truly come to Christ." The first two classes, according to the Confession, are saved, while the third class is insalvable. The Confession nowhere represents any persons as damned, except those who "never truly come to Christ;" but it proclaims the salvation of those sound minded adults, who "answer the call," those infants "dying in infancy," and those moral defectives, "who are incapable of being called by the outward ministry of the word." For all three of these classes of saved persons, the Confession declares that their *right* to eternal life is grounded in the election of the Father, that the actual purchase of that eternal life was made by the atoning death of the Son, and the actual application of that eternal life in conscious experience is made by the Holy Scripture: the only difference between the classes is that the former—elect and sound minded adults—"answer the call;" while the others —dead infants and moral incapables—"are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."

(7) But it is said that the Confession teaches, at least by implication, that there are some *non-elect infants*. Of course it does. If the doctrine of predestination is true; if God distributed the human race into the elect and the non-elect, before the foundation of the world, then some members of the human family must be born elect, and some born non-elect: the classification of elect and non-elect, if true at all, must be true prior to manhood, prior to birth itself. But the Confession teaches that all non-elect infants grow to be those persons, who "never truly come to Christ:" consequently no non-elect infant dies in infancy, but lives to maturity, choses in adulthood a life of impenitency and sinful

disobedience, and persistently refuses to "come to Christ" as often as the gospel is offered to him, and at last dies incorrigible, and self-willed in his resistance to the outward call of the ministry. Being a reprobate, he has no right to eternal life, no provision has been made for his redemption, no subjective change has been made in his moral appetencies: so far as God is concerned, he is left to live as he pleases, and to come at last to the destiny of his own choice. All men are damnable because of their Adamic connection; but none are actually damned, according to the Confession, except those who "never truly come to Christ:" all dead infants are excluded hereby from the class of the damned.

The Westminster Confession, to conclude, together with the Calvinistic theology, which is but the elaboration of the contents of this doctrinal symbol, squarely and fairly teaches that all infants, and idiots, and moral incapables and unfortunates, living and dying in their moral incompetency, are saved. It admits and inculcates their inherent damnability, because of their Adamic connection; but it denies that any of them are actually damned, because of their Christic connection. It grounds the salvation of this class of persons, not in the administration upon them of some sacramental or ecclesiastical rite, but in the application to them of the entire schedule of saving grace.

Any human being who ultimately reaches heaven and its blessedness, will be a full debtor to the Triune God, and will owe the praises of redemption co-equally to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: to the Father, for his electing love; to the Son, for his atoning death; to the Spirit, for his sanctifying grace.

In that white-robed throng of redeemed parents, which night and day circles the throne of grace on the light-covered hills beyond the stars, with halle-

lujas of praise bursting from their throats like the laughter of multitudinous waters, magnifying the electing love of the Father, the atoning death of the Son, and the sanctifying grace of the Spirit—in that assembly of glorified fathers and mothers, there will be the countless multitude of infants and mental unfortunates, who went out of the earth through the gates of death prior to their moral competency, lifting up their joyous doxologies for the Electing Love of the Father, which gave *them* the right to heaven; for the Atoning Death of Christ, which cleansed *their* lives from the guilt of sin; and for the Sanctifying Grace of the Holy Spirit, which made *them* meet for the saints' inheritance in light: according to CALVINISM.